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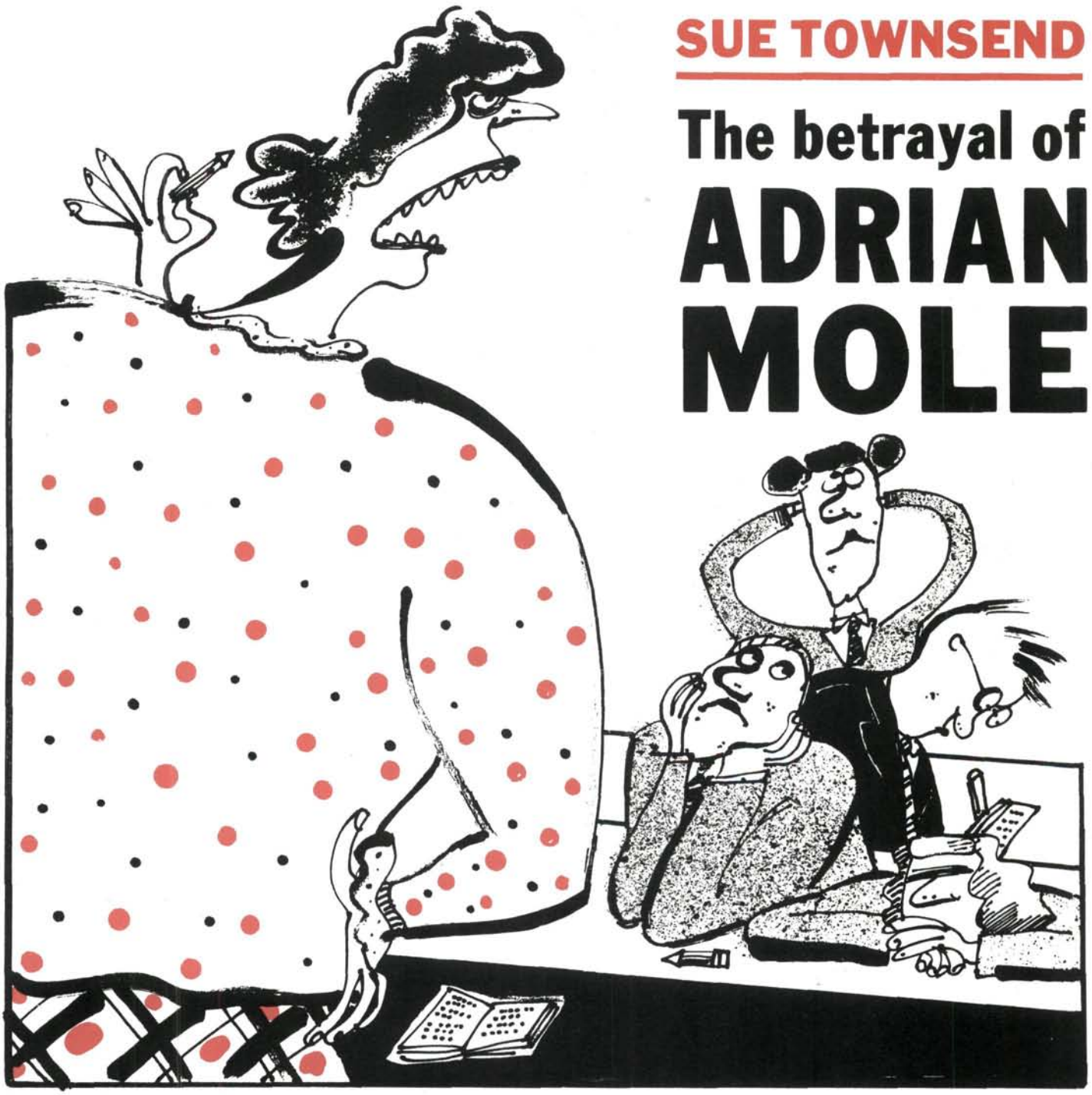

SUE TOWNSEND

The betrayal of ADRIAN MOLE

ANNA COOTE: Labour's Ministry for Women

T. M. PASCA: The Holy War of John Paul II

GREG PHILO: Television's cold warriors

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The laws that govern London's transport are about to be changed, and if they're implemented more or less anybody will be able to operate their own bus service.

The idea is that increased competition will bring fares down.

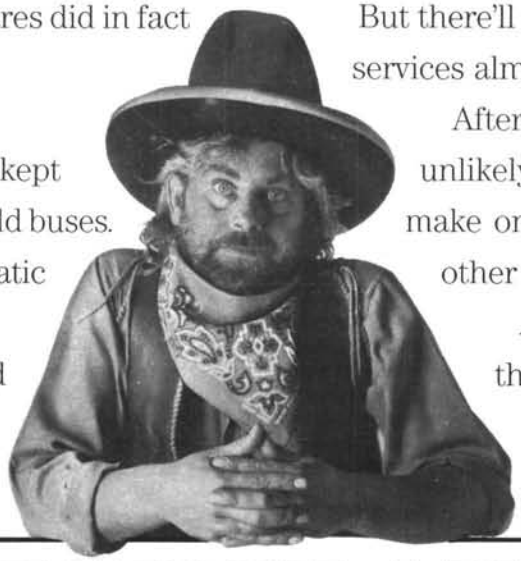
It's an idea that's recently had a trial run in Hereford, and some fares did in fact come down.

But so did standards.

The new bus operators kept costs down by running very old buses.

Also by running very erratic services.

And by failing to spend much money on safety or servicing.



SOON, ALMOST ANYBODY WILL BE ABLE TO SET UP A BUS SERVICE IN LONDON.

As a result two of Hereford's three new operators were eventually banned from the streets.

The other one went out of business, along with two bus companies that had served Hereford well for years before the experiment began.

Now Hereford has just one effective bus company, no real competition and fares have started to rise again.

But Hereford, is a nice small town, where cowboy operators are easily spotted and easily traced.

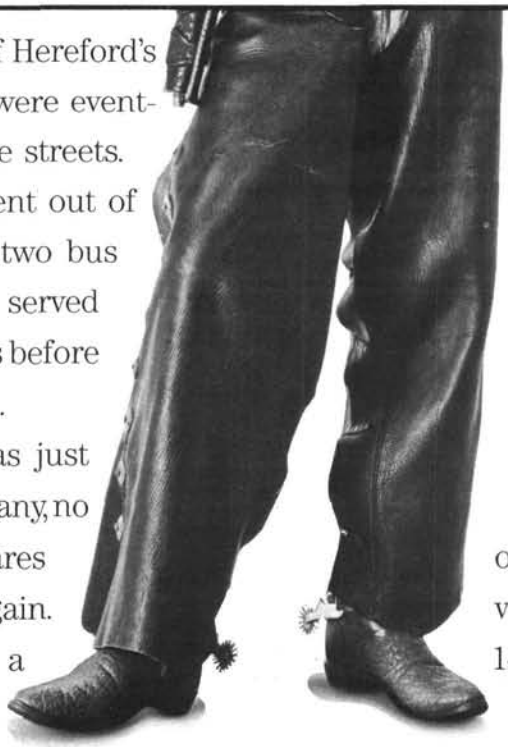
So what will it be like when they come to London?

Well, it's true there could be plenty of cut-price services clogging up money-making routes like Oxford Street.

But there'll be high-priced infrequent services almost everywhere else.

After all, private operators are unlikely to spend the money they make on busy routes to subsidise other less profitable services.

And there's little chance that they'll spend it on bus shelters or bus maps. Or travel passes that let you change from bus to bus or bus to underground.



And there's certainly no profit to be made from free bus passes for senior citizens.

So before we turn our bus services over to just anybody, perhaps somebody should do something?

The next opportunity will occur when the House of Lords votes on the Transport Bill on 14th October.

CAPITAL TRANSPORT CAMPAIGN

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON WHAT'S HAPPENING TO LONDON'S TRANSPORT SYSTEMS, WRITE TO CAPITAL TRANSPORT CAMPAIGN, HEADLAND HOUSE, 308 GRAYS INN ROAD, LONDON, WC1X 8DP.

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New Statesman

Cover drawing: Christine Roche

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NEXT WEEK

MIDDLE-CLASS NESTS

For Mrs Thatcher, Anglican bishops are 'cuckoos' in what was once their Tory party nest. The Church of England is still thoroughly middle-class, says TERRY TASTARD; it's the Tory party that has moved away from Church values

HOW TO BECOME AN MP

Are you tough? Are you male? Do you have an answer to every question? Then you too can be a Labour MP. But is this what we really want, asks MP HARRIET HARMAN (left)

NETTING THE OLD BOYS

You find them in the Cabinet, inside the TUC and even at the *New Statesman*. They are the public school elite. BARRY HUGILL examines ways in which we might get rid of them

BLACK MUSIC

CHARLES FOX goes to the GLC's Festival of Black Music

From musket to guided missile: reviews of two new books about soldiering

New Statesman

Vol 110 No 2844 27 September 1985

Labour must set its own agenda

A GREAT DEAL has been achieved in the two years since Neil Kinnock became Leader of the Opposition and Mrs Thatcher began her second term of office. Memory is short, but in 1983 serious people seriously speculated whether the Labour Party was not in the process of terminal disintegration. In the interval, under the Kinnock leadership, the party has regained an electoral credibility that was quite simply absent in 1983. Its organisation has been somewhat modernised and its image substantially so. The impression is now generated of a party and a leadership that, in place of obsession with internal strife, is serious about wresting political power from the Tories.

Historically, saving the Labour Party from its urge to electoral self-destruction is already a major achievement of the Kinnock regime. But that is not the same thing as winning a majority of the votes and seats at the next election.

Certainly, the Thatcher government has once again fallen even below the levels of unpopularity that it was at in 1982 before the Falklands War. But Labour is not, as it should be at this stage, in a commanding lead in the opinion polls. Kinnock as leader has the worst personal ratings since he was first elected. More fundamentally, perhaps, the proportion of those who think that the Labour Party is damagingly 'divided' has only come down from 80 to 70 per cent in the last two years. For Labour lost the last election largely because of the popular perception that it was a party divided against itself and, therefore, in no condition to form a government.

In short, the 1983-5 rescue phase of the Kinnock leadership has been successfully accomplished and is over. If Labour is to win the next election with a majority in its own right there now has to be a shift into a different gear. For as Peter Kellner shows on p.9, the comforting notion that the swing of the pendulum against Mrs Thatcher will by itself carry Labour back into office is no longer valid. For there is now a third party in the field — the Liberal-SDP Alliance. Its roots may be shallow, but for the moment it has quite obviously got an effective political act together and for the moment it commands the support of the majority of the anti-Thatcher vote.

So, with little more than two years to go until the next election, the Bournemouth conference is of critical importance to Neil Kinnock. If Labour is to start the next phase of the climb back to power, he must use next week to lead the party in two areas.

1. **The leadership itself**. Nothing is more difficult than democratic leadership. And Labour, for all its faults, is an infinitely more democratic party than the Tories or the SDP — or even than the Liberals. Conference, the National Executive and the Parliamentary Party are all in different ways real focuses of political power that do not exist in other British parties. They are part of the enduring democratic strength of Labour, but the consequence is that a Labour leader has less freelance capacity than other party leaders.

But still it is a leader's function and duty to shift the terms of the political debate forward. In opposition this can only really be done by public statement — speeches, articles, interviews. Mrs Thatcher did it between her election as Tory leader in 1975 and the general election of 1979. She challenged central assumptions

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of the previous Tory regime openly. She created a debate about the reasons for the apparent failures of past policy. She slowly changed the climate of British politics.

As we know to our cost, the content of what became Thatcherism boiled down to an appeal to greed and a return to Victorian values. But that makes it all the more necessary that the Labour leadership now should develop an open critique of why the Labour Party in the period between 1975 and 1983 was not able to counter the steady growth of the Thatcher political culture.

Neil Kinnock clearly has instinctive views about what went wrong in the period. For example, it is clear from what is said on his behalf that he thinks the adoption of the principle of 'one member one vote' would breathe democratic legitimacy into the party. Yet in public this message is curiously muffled.

Or, to take other areas, it was clear that after 1983 there needed to be a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between the party and the trade union movement and of the party's policy on public ownership. But such floating of new ideas and concepts as there has been — and so far there has not been much — has come mainly not from Neil Kinnock, but from others like Roy Hattersley.

The result of this apparent leadership inactivity has been that the right-wing media has effectively painted a picture of a Labour Party led by a nice and serious guy, but effectively still dominated by Arthur Scargill. If nothing happens to contradict that image (and the vote on the NUM issue next week will not help), this theme will be played *crescendo* in the run up to the next election. The requirement, starting in Bournemouth, is that Neil Kinnock should embark on a series of broad policy statements setting out his political philosophy and his challenges to the Tories, to the electorate and to the Labour Party itself.

2. **Policy.** Neil Kinnock has so far given the impression that he wants to travel light into the next general election campaign, so far as public policy statements are concerned. In part this is an understandable reaction against the bureaucratic mountain of policies that were hung around the party's neck before the last election. In part it is a reflection of the view that concrete policies throw up public divisions within the party and that a publicly divided party is a major electoral liability.

Most of the political stands taken by Labour in the last two years have been in reaction to the initiatives of others. Some have been notably effective, for example the campaign during the summer against the government's proposals to abolish the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme, or the general campaign against the way in which the Tories are dismantling the welfare state. But there is no impression of the Labour Party itself setting a broad political agenda of its own.

It is symbolic of this lack of any clear Labour route map into the 1990s that the long awaited 'statement on democratic socialism' has still not seen the light of day. The draft statement began life as a device with which to beat the Militant Tendency. But last spring it was supposed to have been changed into an ideological and programmatic statement of Labour's position. Instead it seems to have become a backroom exercise in Walworth Road in which no one is particularly interested and which is seen as having no relevance to the next election.

But Labour will not win the next election unless it sets an agenda of its own that engages, or re-engages, the political attention of a greater part of the electorate; and unless it goes beyond mere criticism of the Thatcherite culture and offers a positive alternative to it. Any senior Labour politician who experienced at first hand the bitter civil war within the party after 1979 can be forgiven for putting a high price on the preservation of unity.

But socialism is about changing society. It is a positive concept and Neil Kinnock must now begin to expound it positively. □

gruesome gizmos

Remember how the rich were going to be squeezed until the pips squeaked?

Never really happened did it?

Next week **New Statesman** will change all that. In partnership with Armitage Products we're giving away 100 'Pet Hates' to our readers. They're pliable, six inches tall and designed by Luck and Flaw of Spitting Image. And they squeak. They've been hanging around the office for a couple of weeks now and are driving us all mad.

For the chance to kick Maggie and Ronnie around, just enter one of the competitions in next week's **New Statesman**.

WHO SAID WE DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR?

Sir Keith couldn't care less

SIR KEITH Joseph, who for some reason was not retired in Mrs Thatcher's music hall Cabinet reshuffle earlier this month, is presiding over an educational disaster with his handling of the teachers' pay dispute. With morale, pay and career prospects as low as they are in the education service, it is clear that this Government has no serious concern for public education.

There is without question a great deal of bad teaching and there are many bad teachers in our state schools. Sir Keith is striking a populist chord when he argues that good teachers should be rewarded and standards raised. But there is also a great deal of bad policing and there are many bad police officers. Yet at the end of their probation, new graduate police officers in London, for example, get £10,250, with proper prospects of promotion and salary increases. By contrast the *average* salary of a Scale 1 teacher in this country is £7,687.

In the present state of the education service, career prospects are dismal. Even if a teacher advances to become the head of a large secondary school, the typical salary for an unusually demanding job is under £15,800, without any of the perks that go with other professional occupations.

The only useable negotiating weapon that teachers have is the withdrawal of their voluntary co-operation for out-of-class activities. If, as Sir Keith is asking, they trade this in for more money now, they are in effect agreeing to a 'no strike' contract. Many dedicated teachers would be prepared to settle for such arrangements, but only on the basis that the government valued their contribution to society at least roughly on a par with that of the police. □

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2ND YEAR OF PROTEST LOOMS FOR HAPLESS ADDENBROOKE'S 'PRIVATISATION' PICKETS

NEXT MONTH sees the first anniversary of the 'privatisation' strike at Cambridge's Addenbrooke's hospital, where 150 health workers have been picketing for a year in protest against the private-sector cleaning contract awarded by the local authority. And next month there's to be another attempt at settling the row. FULTON GILLESPIE reports

Stefano Cagnoni/Report

Long, long ago. . .1984, when union general secretaries, Bickerstaffe from NUPE and Williams from COHSE, turned up to encourage the troops — who are now despondent with loneliness

ADDENBROOKE'S hospital in Cambridge is a government designated centre of excellence, but to the health workers on strike for a year it's their personal heartbreak house. They warned the Conservative-dominated health authority that privatising cleaning would lead to a disastrous fall in standards.

It also led to their wages being chopped by 50 per cent, holidays slashed and sick pay abolished. They are striking not for more pay, but for the same pay and conditions they knew before privatisation. They didn't expect to get support from their managers but they did expect it from their national union officials — and by these, they feel, they have been let down.

Every day since 1 October last year they have picketed the 700 bed hospital they were once proud of because it was their labour that kept it clean. In the early days of the dispute they were visited by NUPE's general secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe and COHSE's David Williams and for the first few months there were weekly visits from regional reps. But although the national leadership still officially supports the strike, the visits have stopped and the workers feel isolated. Porter Graham Heneghan says: 'We get £15 per week strike pay and fine words. When we do see a national official it's to tell us that such and such a hospital has settled, with the implication that we should too.'

Serious criticisms

Addenbrooke's £725,000 cleaning contract was won by OCS Hospital Services, a company with no other current NHS cleaning contract and a record of taking on dubious employees. Since they started at Addenbrooke's one cleaner has been fired for selling vodka to alcoholic patients, four schoolchildren have been sacked when their ages were discovered, and some staff have been disciplined for smoking and drinking on duty.

Orthopaedic surgeon Dr David Marsh cancelled his operating list this March when he found blood and bone splinters on the theatre floor. Junior doctors complained to the BMA when they were invited to hire vacuum cleaners at 50p a time to clean their own residences, where apparently insect infestation had become rife.

Relatives visiting patients have ended up on hands and knees scrubbing filthy ward floors and one visitor had to fetch his car tool kit to remove the blocked up u-bend of a ward sink gummed up by strands from OCS cleaners' mops.

Says Community Health Council chair Ray Jobling, a Cambridge University lecturer, 'You make savings if you get a better service for the same money, or the same service for less money. There is no saving in reducing standards to the level we've experienced here.'

'Scathing' criticism

At one point his council was so scathing in its monthly attacks on the cleaning that the Health Authority chair, Stephen Bragg, a Wolfson College administrator, tried to ban the public watchdog from the hospital. He didn't succeed.

The row led to OCS getting more money from the Health Authority as a result of changes in the contract specification, to the point where — it's alleged — it would have been virtually as economic to accept the health workers' own tender which was only £6,000 higher.

Such a situation would have avoided the battle which still goes on. Next month OCS and ACAS sit down with the unions. If a settlement isn't reached, the Addenbrooke's strike could yet go into the record books along with Barking Hospital's 18-months stoppage. ●

Sugar-cuts in the Hewlett Packard 'coffee culture'

THE 3,500 British employees of computer giant Hewlett Packard Ltd have all been told to take more time off. In what amounts to the equivalent of a five per cent pay cut, workers have agreed to take four days unpaid leave over the next four months. They are also being encouraged to ask for much longer periods off if they want to travel round the world or build a house.

This relatively new industrial relations ploy was necessary, says the company, because of a 12 per cent slump in worldwide orders for micro-electronic and telecommunications equipment. Workers at the firm's non-unionised factories in South Queensferry near Edinburgh, Bristol, Wokingham and elsewhere have made no visible form of protest.

Hewlett Packard's director of corporate communications, Roger Wilson, talks enthusiastically about his company's 'open and sharing' management style — what he terms 'the HP way'. This involves profit-sharing, open-plan offices, and something called 'coffee-break culture'. According to Wilson, this means you keep all your employees informed of the good news and the bad news during informal discussions. Thus they should be happy to share the good times and prepared to help out when times get hard.

HP sauce

Crucially 'the HP way' means no trade unions. Wilson claims that his company does recognise the right of individuals to join a union but that employees have never formally broached the subject. 'We'd be surprised if a trade union could contribute anything' he says.

He points out too that all the company's senior management in Britain — including himself — accepted a straight five per cent cut in salary in June this year. The firm's 50,000 American employees agreed to the equivalent of a 10 per cent cut from 1 August.

Hewlett Packard has opted for this form of cost-cutting because of its 'philosophy of job security', Wilson says. But according to Doug Harrison, the assistant secretary of the Scottish TUC, a more likely reason is the company's awareness of the acute shortage of skilled workers in the micro-electronics industry.

Rob Edwards

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As the Handsworth enquiry plods on . . .

REPORT CONFIRMS THE 'B' STATUS OF BLACKS

DOUGLAS HURD'S absurd contention that the Handsworth riots were the result of nothing more than 'criminality' is further undermined by a report published by West Midlands county council this week, confirming what is blindingly obvious to everyone except the Home Secretary: that job prospects for young blacks in the area are virtually non-existent. CARSON BLACK reports

IN 1984 only 9 per cent of all 16 year olds who left school in Birmingham got jobs. But for blacks the position was even worse. Although they form 20 per cent of school leavers, they got only 8.7 per cent of the jobs going.

So while 1,410 white school leavers got work, only 102 Asians and 33 Afro-Caribbeans succeeded. And in Coventry, blacks were even more disadvantaged: white youths were *nine* times more likely to get work.

For those without work the only alternative to unemployment is the YTS scheme. But, according to the new report, *Unequal Opportunities — Racial Discrimination and Government Training Schemes*, black youths suffer overt racial discrimination both by employers participating in the YTS scheme and by the scheme's managing agents (*See also* NS *5 October 1984*).

Black teenagers find themselves being channelled into the much less popular 'Mode B' schemes. Whereas Mode A trainees work with firms and are likely to get jobs at the end, Mode B trainees get placements in workshops, and have more limited job opportunities. These local findings are consistent with nationwide studies of YTS done by the Commission for Racial Equality.

When researcher Anna Pollert did a simple telephone survey of firms, she discovered evidence of overt racial prejudice. She got responses like: 'All our trainees are British' and 'all are white definitely — I've had one black before and never again.'

The few with 'A' places

Statistics confirm the discrimination: of the 27 employers in the region who took on Mode A trainees, only ten had any blacks at all in June this year. Of those with blacks, Cadbury Schweppes had two out of 20, GKN Hardy Spicer had two out of 52, Land Rover had one out of 41 and Kalamazoo had four out of 20 — figures quite typical of major employers in the area.

There was evidence that even those blacks who were placed on Mode A schemes didn't get permanent jobs at the end. Ms Pollert concludes: 'It is one thing to take on a black trainee for one year subsidised by the government, and quite another to pay one on a permanent basis. It is therefore likely that black trainees provide a cheap cosmetic face mask of equal opportunities for some large employers.'

It's ironic that YTS, which was set up as a direct result of the 1981 riots in an attempt to occupy bored and rebellious youth who had no employment prospects, is serving only to reinforce the stereotypical discrimination and deprivation complained about by black youth in Birmingham.

The news that the scheme is to be extended from one year to two is very little comfort for them. ●

Paul Mattsson

Cops ease up at S A House

LAST WEEK, police backed down in their confrontation with City AA over the topographical detail of their weekly anti-apartheid picket outside South Africa House, in Trafalgar Square.

Demonstrators will now be allowed to protest directly in front of the ornate Embassy gates. Last year, demonstrators successfully overcame police efforts to restrict pickets to a side-street.

130 arrests of City AA's supporters have taken place since 2 August for demonstrating on the previously forbidden ground. Despite the climb down the police are insisting on pursuing all the outstanding prosecutions.

A test case on the issue opened in Bow Street Magistrates court on 20 September, and is expected to wind up this Monday (30 September).

Terry O'Halloran

Peace Protests Roll Call (19)

Total arrested in UK and Eire since September 1981: 7,891

Arrests to date by location

Tunbridge Wells, Kent **11**
6.8.85. 6 'artists' caught whitehanded shadow painting pavements. 5 others 'gave themselves up' in solidarity the following evening. First 6 have been 'reported for summons' on cr. damage charge. Other 5 have been told police will 'be in touch'.
● Graham Richards a member of Tonbridge Wells CND was sentenced to 7 days in jail on 26 July for non-payment of fine. He was one of a group of seven who were charged with 'insulting behaviour' for standing, arms linked, and heads bowed in silence at the Cenotaph upon the arrival of cruise missiles in Britain.

Wood Lane, Shepherd's Bush **7**
6.8.85. 7 arrested for painting 18 shadows with non-permanent paint. 4 finally charged with cr. damage. Some of the 7 detained at Shepherds Bush police station were asked personal and political questions.

Greenham Hackney Women **3**
3 women arrested at their homes after shadow painting at 7 different sites in Hackney. One of the women involved who has two young children was arrested at 4.30 a.m. and taken to Stoke Newington police station with her children to be charged with cr. damage. Hackney Council said, however, they were not pressing charges and all three were later released.

Derby **6**
6 arrested shadow painting ch. with 'damaging footpaths, possessing articles — namely paintbrushes and paint (sinister) intending to do damage, blemishing the peace and making unauthorised markings on the highway'. The 6 were charged in spite of the fact that Derbyshire County Council had given their permission for the painting of shadows. Police ignored this and decided to prosecute.

ROF Burghfield, Berkshire **9**
19.9.85. 9 Greenham women arrested and charged with criminal damage have had their trial adjourned for 6 weeks pending the Director of Public Prosecutions' decision on whether or not they will be charged under the Offical Secrets Act. The women entered Burghfield to protest about the military exercise 'Brave Defender'.

Chicksands USAF Interception Site, Nr Bedford **2**
10.9.85. 2 Molesworth peace campers arrested by armed US Guards during 'Brave Defender' military exercise. Held for several hours then dumped at the A1 late at night.

Menwith Hill NATO Communications Centre **5**
26.8.85. 7 people occupied the water tower at Menwith Hill for 4½ hours. 5 arrested and held in Harrogate Police Station o/night. Ch. with 'noisy and turbulent behaviour causing br. of peace and obstruction of police'. Case to be heard at Pately Bridge Magistrates 10 a.m. 27 September.

Faslane Peace Camp, Nr Helensburgh, Scotland **70**
16.9.85. 70 arrested on 'Red Action' Close the Base demo. Charged mainly with obstruction.

Greenham Common USAF base
18.9.85. Katrina Howse jailed for 6 months at Reading Crown Court. Judge Blomefield took into consideration a 4-month suspended sentence and added two months for the recent 'offence'. Katrina conducted her own defence and read to the court the notorious 'SAS' letter sent to CND which said that a Greenham woman would be framed.
19.7.85. Angie Clark and five other women held overnight in Newbury Cells after being found guilty of trespass.
30.8.85. Paula Yates from yellow gate plus 4 other women sentenced to 9 hours in Newbury police cells. Paula Yates claims she was held down forcibly by 3 wps in a toilet and given an intimate body search while two policemen looked on. Police complaints authority are investigating this case.
● A Greenham woman sentenced in the late afternoon to Newbury police cells 'until the court finished for the day' was locked up for only four minutes — 'I didn't even have time to read the walls' she lamented.
Please send new information to **Janey Hulme** *at the* New Statesman.

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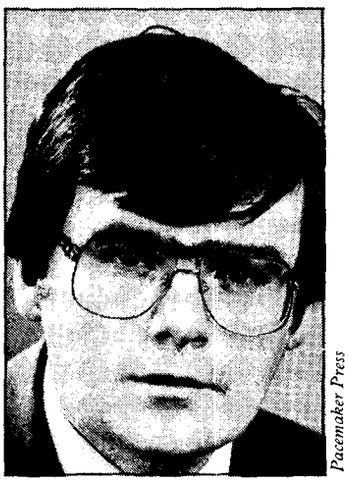
Protestant extremists rally in Glasgow

Belfast councillor George ('Burn the Fenians') Seawright has taken his campaign against the current Anglo-Irish talks to Scotland. He told a little publicised but packed meeting in Glasgow last Saturday (21 September) that Protestants have the right to take the law into their own hands.



Pacemaker Press

Councillor Seawright, moderate chap

'I believe,' he stated, 'that we must plant the IRA six feet under the soil of Ulster. We must plant the Republicans' machine in the soil to fertilise it. I, George Seawright, am prepared to pull the trigger myself.'

The Glasgow rally, following a march from a local Orange Hall, contained a number of British National Party members, and was accompanied by six Orange flute bands. It was called by the umbrella Scottish Loyalists Organisation, comprising the UDA, the UVF and the apprentice boys of Derry. The UVF is an unlawful organisation in Ireland.

Scots supporters of 'Troops Out' and anti-racist campaigners fear that this new campaign could lead to communal violence north of the border, in the event of armed Ulster Protestant violence in response to the outcome of the Anglo-Irish talks.

As Saturday's meeting closed, the chairman shouted that the platform had received information that 'the Teagues [Catholics] are about to lay a wreath to Bobby Sands in George Square — I am sure you all want to be there'.

Hundreds of demonstrators ran from the hall and through the streets, pushing aside shoppers and shouting slogans. When they reached George Square in the City centre, they formed groups to guard all roads leading into the centre. There was no police interference.

No wreath laying took place, nor did Seawright, who had earlier declared 'I will fight myself', accompany the foray.

Ian Sutherland

60 particles turn up on Dounreay's foreshore

A TOTAL of precisely sixty radioactive particles has been found on beaches near the Dounreay nuclear plant on the north coast of Scotland since November 1983, according to the latest government account. This is considerably more than has previously been admitted.

After the *New Statesman*'s report (12 July) about the serious degree of radioactive pollution at Dounreay the Liberal MP for Orkney and Shetland, Jim Wallace, wrote to the Scottish Office demanding more information. In a recent reply, the Scottish Health Minister, John MacKay, has revealed that 34 twenty-year-old metallic particles have been discovered on the enclosed foreshore. They are said to have originated from a spill in 1965 and to have varied in levels of radioactivity from 2 microcuries to 15 millicuries.

A further 26 radioactive spots 'of carbonaceous material' were also found, seven of them on public beaches. According to MacKay, none of these particles 'was of any radiological significance and none has been found since January this year following improvements to the filters on the low active incinerator scrubber system'.

Rob Edwards

Asylum UK

A MEETING of organisations representing Asian political refugees in the UK, and Labour Party Young Socialists, held last Sunday (22 September) in London, resolved to ask the Labour Party and the TUC to spearhead a massive propaganda movement throughout Britain to counteract racism. Speakers noted 'an unprecedented increase in racist attacks'. Farooq, a leader of The Struggle, *a socialist group within the Pakistan People's Party of the late President Bhutto, said that though refugees usually refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of their host country, racism concerns the refugee as much as any other black or Asian living in Britain.*

Anwar Iqbal

MISCELLANY

Ken's gift-horse

The next port of call for Bulgarian-born American artist Christo, now that he's got the Pont Neuf all wrapped up in Paris, could be County Hall. His declared projects are six-mile strings of giant umbrellas in the USA and Japan and/or the wrapping up of the Reichstag in Berlin. But we

hear that with only 187 days (as of 27 September) to go to GLC abolition, he's being considered for the task of wrapping County Hall as a last-day 'present' to Thatcher. We only hope the Arts & Rec people can fit it into their budget. It would be the biggest laugh Londoners have had yet.

BBC's shoddy goods

Has the BBC already decided that it can't beat them, so it might as well join them? Officially, the Beeb bigwigs are fighting off the threat of advertising and the Peacock Committee. But those who switched on BBC2's Commercial Breaks *last Friday were treated to an unadulterated 30 minute plug for George Davies and his Next and Next for Men clothing empire. The genius, it seemed, was expanding into soft furnishings. His new shops were a runaway success. Sales were way above projections. Not a single difficult question was asked, nor did the programme suggest why the BBC was devoting so much prime time to the puff. All the more surprising then to read over the credits naming Jonathan Crane as executive editor the superimposed message that since the film was shot sales had in fact failed to meet targets. No explanation at all as to why in that case the previous half hour had lavishly given the wrong impression.*

Grace Darling who?

Yet — who says the BBC won't stand up to government? Down in Plymouth last weekend, the Beeb's defence correspondent Christopher Wain took on and defeated the British military machine. The RN were trying to prevent a film crew from going on a Sea King helicopter on the grounds that the sound recordist was a woman. 'If there was an accident,' they said, 'an untrained female wouldn't be able to operate emergency equipment, whereas an untrained male could.' All ended happily when Wain — heedless of the Peacock enquiry — said that it was the biggest load of bullshit he'd ever heard. The mission proceeded.

Unremarked

There were parts of the Liberal assembly in Dundee which even saturation coverage didn't reach. Perhaps because of the blushes of journalists. Saturday's session included a motion urging establishment of 'well women clinics' to help specifically with women's medical problems, underrated in a medical profession still dominated by MCPs. One Liberal who took the rostrum spoke passionately of hysterectomies endured by her relatives, and of her own fears when she felt threatened by a mastectomy. Then she said a true thing from the wrong platform: 'If it were men's balls instead of my boobs, we'd have had these clinics long ago.' Um . . . er . . . stammered the political journalists: 'Don't we have a woman Prime Minister?'

Flukinaucinihilipif . . .

Now (p4) you know why, this September, Miscellany has had Fluck and Law squeaky politician toys to offer as prizes in our silly competition to find sitcom plot-lines named after well-known periodicals, to match the ghastly show *The New Statesman* currently on the tube. You've turned *Marxism Today* and *Harpers & Queen* into roaring farces (always supposing they weren't before) in the last two weeks. Now Noel Petty, a burgeoning Dennis Potter of Stockton-on-Tees, has come up with a weekly series *The Guardian*. This 'centres round Betty Blackhouse (*Thora Hird*), a public morals crusader with a self-declared mission to clean up the media. The comic tension is supplied by her two grown-up children still living at home. Jamie (*John Inman*) is a male model and drag artist' (*both?*) 'with some very peculiar friends, and Leslie (*Glenda Jackson*) a Greenham Common leftie with an eye for the girls. Needless to say, the clash between Betty's Victorian values and her equally Victorian maternal instincts supplies lots of comedy and pathos. Making up the household is Dad (*Warren Mitchell*) who doesn't understand anything'. Keep 'em coming. Toys to go.

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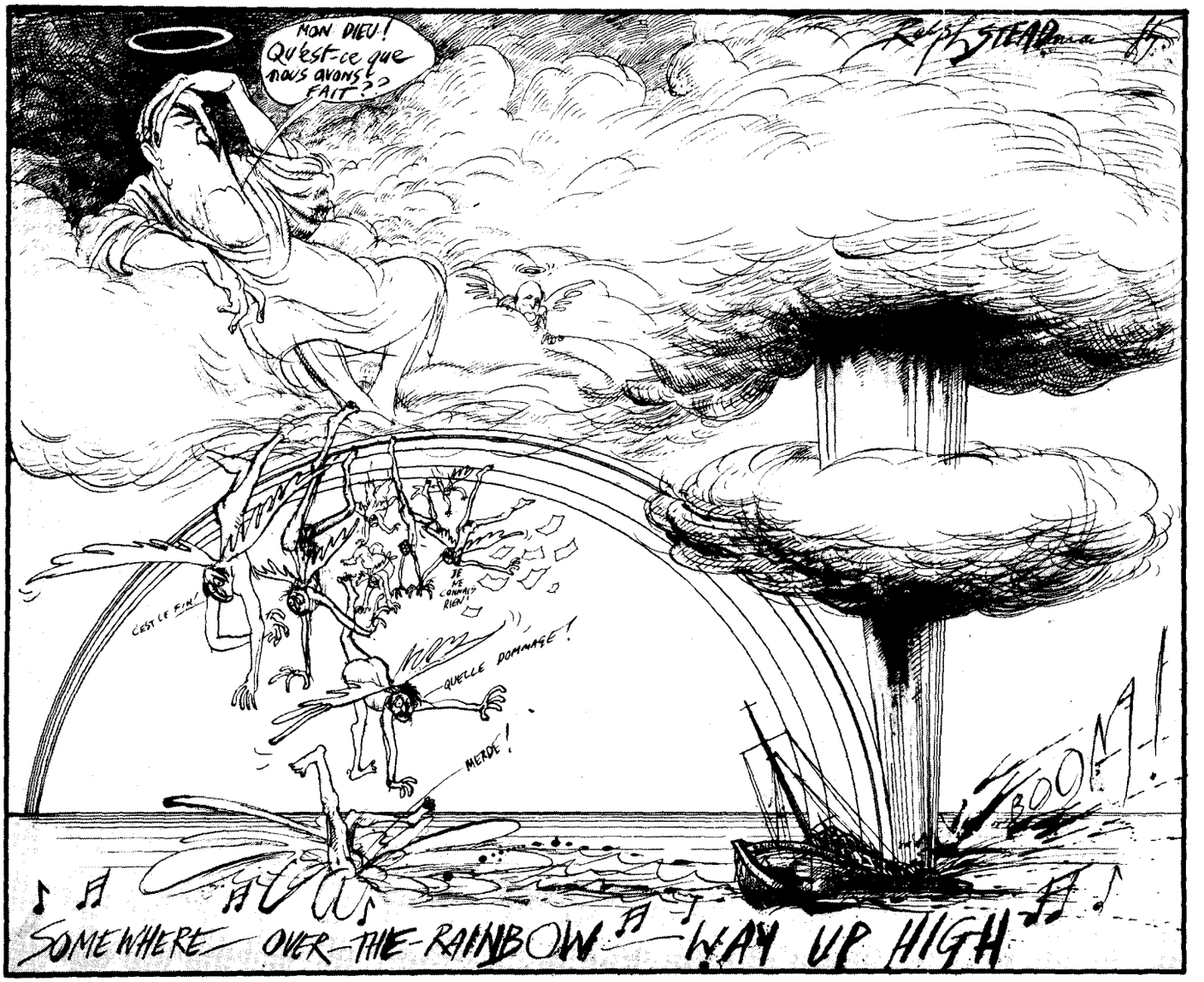

'Loneliness of an an abused child'

Logo of Childwatch, founded by Dianne Core and Debbie Rees

Jasmine Beckford prompted me to start Childwatch. She died in the most appalling circumstances, somewhat akin to a Japanese prisoner of war, subjected to cruelty and torture that the human mind cannot comprehend. There is nothing to compare with the loneliness of an abused child. What is so horrifying is that Jasmine was known to the Social Services.

So was Maria Colwell who died nine years previously. Then they said it would never happen again. Since then we have had Darren Clark, Carley Taylor, Lucy Gates, Richard Frazer, Maria Mehmedagi, Michael Clark, Paul Brown, Christopher Stock, Tyra Henry, Lester Chapman, Marie Payne, Nicola Brooks, Sarah Morris, Hannah Newman, Leoni Keating, Stacey Kavanagh, Tina Beechook and finally Heidi Koseda. Some of these known to the statutory agencies, some that should have been known to them.

What in God's name is going on, you ask? I have asked that question every time a child has been laid out on some cold mortuary slab somewhere; every time we have a costly enquiry into someone's incompetence, some naivety, due to lack of training because of lack of finance, etc. etc. Lord Tonypandy says that this is the age of the volunteer — and the responsibility for these children should be partly shouldered by society. Hence Childwatch.

We work on the prevention-is-better-than cure adage, and also that public awareness is the best weapon against child abuse. So we have produced a down to earth leaflet called '*If in doubt — shout!*' a practical guide on what to do if you witness or suspect child abuse.

So far we have circulated 150,000 of these leaflets all over the country. The general public are thirsty for this knowledge. I am glad that they are. Far too many children have died in a desert of apathy: 'It's nothing to do with me and I don't want to get involved'. Well it damn well is something to do with you. And you should get involved. Being nosy could save a child's life.

Childwatch is a pressure group that is asking government to restructure the social services so that the social worker can specialise instead of being jack of all trades, master of none. We need child abuse flying squads that can follow a case through from beginning to end. We need mature experienced social workers who have brought up families of their own and who know the pressures of family life. We need special units for family therapy. There are only a few in the country. Predominantly run by the hard pressed NSPCC. We need sanity. We need practical down to earth common sense.

I am sick to death of these academics who practice their craft out of text books. I am sick of middle and upper management senior social workers who give 1970 answers to 1985 problems. I am sick of trendy lefties who are so political that they are blinkered to what is going on around them. I am sick of grey areas, just a polite word for 'I don't know how to pigeonhole this one', but most of all I am sick of these children being subjected to brutality that puts our war crimes to shame.

Childwatch is here and it will grow. I am not saying that we have all the answers. I am not saying that we'll save more lives. What I am saying is that we will have a good try and that is a damn sight more than some in the vast catacombs of bureaucracy. Edmund Burke said: 'All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing'. Well I'm not good but I'm doing something.

Dianne Core

Childwatch was started by Dianne Core and Debbie Rees, both ex-social and community workers, in April this year. For further information, write to 'Childwatch', 60 Beck Road, Everthorpe, Brough, North Humberside.

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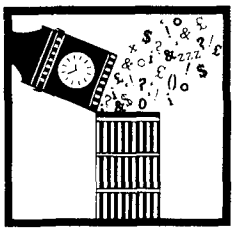

Why Labour is condemned to fight a clean campaign

THE STORY SO FAR: new research, reported here last week, finds that class has just as much influence today on voting behaviour as it used to. Labour's problem is not so much that the working class is deserting the party (although, like all other classes, millions did in 1983), but that the working class itself is shrinking. We last glimpsed Neil Kinnock, our hero, down a deep hole with no visible means of escape. . .

ONE QUESTION guaranteed to cause an apoplectic fit in any self-respecting Labour activist is: what should we learn from the Wilson era? The conventional response goes like this: he codded the Labour Party into believing he had political principles — he even made out, briefly, that they were *socialist* principles — when in fact he had none. He lurched from crisis to crisis with no clear sense of direction. He was devious and untrustworthy and gave pragmatism a bad name. When he became leader of the party he inherited a sea-worthy vessel; he bequeathed a wreck.

Some of which may be true; but it is far from the whole truth. Harold Wilson also led the Labour Party to four general election victories out of five between 1964 and 1974. That fact alone should suggest that the lessons to learn from his time are not merely destructive ones. Electoral success may be far from a sufficient condition for securing progressive policies, but it is beyond doubt a necessary one.

Labour's main electoral achievement during the Wilson era was, broadly, to offset the decline in working-class numbers with an increase in Labour's appeal to the middle classes. Between October 1964 and October 1974, Labour's overall share of the vote fell by six points; but among the fastest growing groups — the 'salariat' (managers, professionals etc) and 'routine non-manual' — Labour's support rose substantially: from 20 to 27 per cent among the salariat, and from 31 to 37 per cent among routine non-manual workers.

Even in 1979 much of that support held; but in 1983 it collapsed, especially within the salariat.

One of the keys to unlocking Labour's predicament is to explain what happened in the two 1974 elections. At one level, Labour won by default: Labour's vote was down compared with 1970, but the Tory vote was down even more. But that observation can be turned round, with some relevance to today: Labour withstood the Liberal advance in the early 1970s far better than the Tories. Why?

Left-wingers argue that it was the radicalism of the 1974 election manifestos that brought Labour victory. Party members worked with real enthusiasm for a Labour victory, whereas in 1970 everyone was demoralised by Labour's record in office.

In *How Britain Votes**, Heath, Jowell and Curtice (HJC) demolish the myth that Labour owed its 1974 victory to public knowledge and approval of its radical promises. They conclude that whereas

> Labour actually moved to the left between 1970 and 1974 . . . the electorate failed to notice, or perhaps believe, the shift . . . The electorate contained similar proportions of people in 1970 and 1974 who thought that there was 'a great deal of difference' between the parties. There was no clear perception that the parties had moved apart.

PETER KELLNER

What could explain this consensual Labour image? HJC's explanation is that since the 1960s

> the party leadership had remained the same . . . Whatever the small print of the manifesto might have said, the Labour Party as an institution could still be regarded as having a moderate rather than a radical character.

The same could not be said of 1983: the leadership had changed, and Labour's policies were clearly perceived to have changed. One significant finding by HJC is that Labour did *not* lose votes through being seen as incompetent: hardly anyone in their sample was found to believe in Labour's policies but then to vote against the party because its leadership was not competent enough to carry out those policies. Labour lost votes because its policies were disliked, because its policies were not expected to work, and because the party was divided.

TO WIN NEXT TIME Labour must correct — and be seen to correct — those deficiencies. In electoral terms the need, even more pressing now than it was in Wilson's day, is to collect a substantial share of the white-collar vote.

The arithmetic is as follows. Starting from Labour's 28 per cent share in 1983, a full recovery of Labour's lost working-class vote since 1966 would yield at most an extra six points — and, because the Alliance is bound to syphon off some of that support, it would be unwise to count on more than four extra points coming from working-class voters. This takes Labour to 32 per cent: still eight points short of the 40 per cent level that would secure victory.

One of those eight points should come from the blue-collar elite of technicians and foremen. That still leaves seven to be found from among white-collar workers. If Labour's vote among these groups returns to the peaks it reached when Wilson was leader, the party can — just — reach 40 per cent. But this means repeating Wilson's remarkable double act: he looked like a loyal class leader to working-class voters, while simultaneously appearing as a *classless* national leader to middle-class voters. One of the jibes about Wilson was to say: 'There are two things I dislike about him: his face'. In retrospect his two faces were, perhaps, the features that contributed most to his electoral appeal.

Neil Kinnock's task, then, is to repeat Wilson's achievement by regaining Labour's traditional appeal among working-class voters and then adding to that sufficient support from Britain's middle classes. In round numbers, Labour can hope at most for seven out of 12 million blue-collar votes (including foremen and technicians); the party must also win five out of 16 million middle-class votes.

How? The easiest course would be to slag off the Tories and show how the government has betrayed the interests of even its natural supporters. But I doubt whether that strategy has much mileage left. The government is already deeply unpopular and its own actions may make it more (or less) unpopular over the next two years. But come the next election, after eight years of Mrs Thatcher, her remaining supporters are likely to be a hardy bunch of loyalists; and in as far as any further defections occur, the Alliance rather than Labour will benefit.

Labour's pitch, therefore, needs to be to the anti-Tory majority; the party's task is to pick up most of those anti-Tory votes. Labour's immediate competition is not the Conservative Party but the Alliance — a point that Robin Cook, almost alone of the Shadow Cabinet, has consistently made.

But anti-Alliance propaganda could be counter-productive. Suppose it were highly effective at destroying the credibility of the two Davids, exposing their divisions and mocking their candidates for high office. Is it not as likely that this would propel weak Alliance supporters back to the Tory party as to attract them to Labour? It would be like the June 1984 Portsmouth South by-election campaign in reverse: there a brilliant Labour campaign knocked the Tories and helped give the seat to the SDP. Next time an equally brilliant anti-SDP campaign might help keep dozens of Portsmouth Souths in Tory hands.

This analysis leads to a clear conclusion about what Labour needs to do over the next two years. Knocking the Tories is likely to be a waste of effort — and knocking the Alliance liable to be counter-productive. Labour has no alternative but to demonstrate that it, and it alone, has the people, the policies and the determination to provide an alternative government to the Conservatives. For once expediency and principle march hand in hand: for its own good, Labour is condemned to fight a clean campaign. Whether it has the capacity to succeed in this venture, time and Bournemouth will tell. □

*Published by Pergamon, £15.95 hb, £7.95 pb.

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MINISTERING TO WOMEN

Camera Press

If Labour comes to office, it will arrive trailing clouds of fine policies about women. ANNA COOTE reveals the Party's plans for new State powers to implement them

THE LABOUR PARTY might justifiably claim to have taken women more seriously than other major British parties. If you put all its policy statements end to end, they would just about stretch around our most pressing needs and demands. So much for the talk. What of the action? Now that optimists are starting to envisage a Labour return to power, it is time to measure the distance between the Party's mouth and its money.

A small group around Jo Richardson, MP for Barking East and Neil Kinnock's spokesperson on women's rights, will next week launch a proposal for a Ministry for Women's Rights. It comes as an official Labour discussion document and should cause quite a stir. If implemented in full, it would challenge the kind of institutional inertia that has traditionally allowed men in government to resist women's demands for change.

What is proposed is a small but muscular Department, placed within the Cabinet Office, with a Minister in the Cabinet, two Parliamentary Under-Secretaries, a team of political advisers and civil servants.

The architects of the scheme have tried to learn from past failures and avoid some obvious pitfalls. Last time Labour set up machinery to enforce women's rights, it produced the Equal Opportunities Commission, a timorous, marginal quango, apolitical and legalistic in character and constitutionally incapable of sticking its neck out. This time, the plan is to put a powerful machine right at the Prime Minister's elbow, with a fully-fledged political role and influence over other departments.

The new Minister would have an input to all Cabinet committees, a monthly slot for answering questions in the Commons, and an opportunity to initiate or respond to debates on any aspect of government policy.

Lest she should fail to keep her feet on the ground, her political advisers would have the job of liaising with grass roots women's organisations. Part of the plan is a network of Regional Equal Opportunity Units to monitor progress in education, training and employment — each with an advisory board representing trade unions, employers, women's groups, local authorities and training bodies.

The Department would be charged with the task of bringing in new equality legislation to strengthen the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts. It would take over supervision of the Equal Opportunities Commission from the Home Office (a move that could give the EOC the heart it has always lacked); and it would be responsible for getting women properly represented on all public bodies. It would also have the job of ensuring that central and local government operated positive action programmes for their own female employees, and offered work to contractors on condition that they, too, had *bona fide* equal opportunity schemes.

Its role would be to initiate rather than execute. The proposers are anxious that the Department should have real clout, with a Permanent Secretary as well as a private office, and a sufficiently high-powered team of civil servants to impress itself on the rest of Whitehall. (The possibilities for a whole new series of 'Yes, Minister' are all too easy to imagine.)

There is even a list of what each Department is expected to achieve. The Department of Employment should introduce a statutory minimum wage, 'much shorter' working hours and positive action in training for public sector jobs. The Department of Health and Social Security should make sure that local authorities provided free child care facilities for three and four year olds; it should remove discrimination from State benefits and pensions, and enhance child benefit and help for single parents. The Home Office should end discrimination in nationality and immigration laws, act against sexist advertisements and pornographic displays, and boost support for battered women and rape victims. The Department of Education should take positive action to ensure that girls reached their 'full potential'. The Treasury should end the married man's tax allowance. And the Department of the Environment should oversee local authorities in developing 'comprehensive strategies for equal opportunity'.

The proposers point out that Labour is already pledged to the *policies* outlined in the document; the new Department is simply a means of putting them into practice. They have consciously restricted its role, so that it focuses directly on removing sex discrimination and promoting equal opportunity among women. It should not, they say, get involved in questions

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84th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The Greater London Council invites delegates and visitors to the 1985 Labour Party Conference to the following fringe meetings:

"THE POLITICS OF CULTURE AND SPORT: A GLC PERSPECTIVE"

Speakers
PETER PITT
Chair, GLC Arts and Recreation Committee
GEORGE NICHOLSON
Chair, GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee
ALAN TOMKINS
Arts Policy Adviser to the Chair of the GLC Arts and Recreation Committee
STEVE MARSLING
GLC Regional Sports Officer
1.00pm MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
BALLROOM, TRALEE HOTEL, WEST HILL ROAD WEST CLIFF, BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access: There are 3 steps from the hotel reception to the Ballroom, but staff will be on hand to give assistance if required
* Refreshments

"WOMEN'S COMMITTEES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT – WORKING FOR WOMEN AT WORK AND IN THE COMMUNITY"

Speakers
VALERIE WISE
Chair, GLC Women's Committee
SHIRLEY ANDREW
Joint Head,
GLC Women's Committee Support Unit
5.30pm
WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER
BALLROOM, TRALEE HOTEL, WEST HILL ROAD, WEST CLIFF, BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access: There are 3 steps from the hotel reception to the Ballroom but staff will be on hand to give assistance if required
* Refreshments

"DEMOCRACY FOR LONDON'S DOCKLANDS"

The GLC in conjunction with the Democracy for Docklands Campaign
Speakers
GEORGE NICHOLSON
Chair, GLC Planning Committee
Local and Trade Union Speakers
6.00 pm
WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 1985
CREST SUITES 1 AND 2
CREST HOTEL, THE LANDSDOWNE
BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access

"LAND, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT – THE WAY FORWARD"

Speakers
DAVE WETZEL
Chair, GLC Transport Committee
GEORGE NICHOLSON
Chair, GLC Planning Committee
VALERIE WISE
Chair, GLC Women's Committee
5.30pm
MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
MAIN LOUNGE, TRALEE HOTEL, WEST HILL ROAD, WEST CLIFF, BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access: via lift in reception to main lounge
* Refreshments

"GLC: IMPLEMENTING A RACE EQUALITY STRATEGY"

Speakers
PAUL BOATENG
Chair, GLC Police Committee
Vice Chair, GLC Ethnic Minorities Committee
ANSEL WONG
GLC Principal Race Relations Advisor,
1.00pm
WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER
PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE:
MAIN LOUNGE, TRALEE HOTEL WEST HILL ROAD, WEST CLIFF, BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access: via lift in reception to main lounge
* Refreshments

"CONTRACT COMPLIANCE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – GLC WORKING FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PURCHASING POWER"

Speakers
JOHN CARR
Chair, GLC Staff Committee
PAUL BOATENG
Chair, GLC Police Committee
Chair:
HARRIET HARMAN, MP
1.00pm
THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER
THE FORUM ROOM, WESSEX HOTEL WEST CLIFF ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH

* Children welcome
* Wheelchair access: porter assistance at front of Hotel. Ramp at rear of Hotel – assistance here also
* Refreshments

The Greater London Council in conjunction with the National Childcare Campaign invites delegates and visitors to the Labour Party Conference to a fringe meeting

THE UNDER FIVES CHARTER – HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT IT?

Speakers:– **VALERIE WISE** – Chair, GLC Women's Committee
HARRIET HARMAN MP, ANDREW BENNETT MP,
SUE OWEN – Childminding Association
THE WINTERBOURNE HOTEL, PRIORY ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH
MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
12.45 – 1.45 pm (Conference Lunch Break)

* REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE * CHILDREN WELCOME * WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

The GLC always endeavours to hold meetings at venues where there is access for people with disabilities. Where this is not possible, the Council will ensure that staff are on hand to give assistance if required.

GLC
Working for London

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of race, sexual orientation or disablement, except as they affect women. They have rejected the option of teaming up with the race lobby and going for a Minister for Equal Rights. Their view is that women have needs of a different order, on a different scale.

RESTRICTED IT may be, but the proposal is sufficiently drastic to leave an impression — in most quarters — of going quite far enough. There is a danger, though, that it will tie the Party down to an old-fashioned approach, based on 'rights' and problems — the document has an early '70s feel — rather than tackling the deep-seated causes of women's continuing subordination. For instance, there is nothing in the document about housework or power in the family. There is little to suggest that the new Department would transform Labour's approach to planning, which still assumes that the economy revolves inexorably around men at the point of production, and remains blind to women's vast but unpaid contribution.

Against such criticism, the proposers would argue that it is best to deal in concepts that have already been accepted (at least in theory); the Party must learn to walk before it can run.

A more serious difficulty may be that the plan cannot work unless it has the wholehearted backing of the Prime Minister. So far, Neil Kinnock has expressed interest in a Minister, not in an entire Department with statutory powers. There will certainly be opposition, if not from Kinnock himself, then from prominent members of Labour's National Executive Committee and other traditionalists within the Party. The very idea of the new Department is bound to be unpopular with men who are used to running things their own way.

The fortunes of this proposal must surely be tied to those of the long-running campaign of the Labour Women's Action Committee, who want constitutional changes to break the deadlock of women's powerlessness within the Party itself. They want at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist; direct election of the women's section of the National Executive by the Labour women's conference, and five resolutions from the women's conference to go straight on to the agenda of the Party's main annual conference. So far they have had little in the way of practical success. Ann Pettifor, national organiser of the WAC, has reported* that in the current round of parliamentary reselections, 160 of Labour's 170 safest seats have already gone to men. By way of explanation, she quotes the German Marxist August Bebel: 'He argued that not only were men satisfied with the oppression and dependence of women — they were *beneficiaries* of it and would therefore do little to end it.'

It's a circular problem. Labour women haven't enough power in the Party to force through constitutional changes that would, in turn, give them the power they need to introduce political measures to end the oppression of women at large. Their only hope, it appears, is that men will bow to pressure and shift their ground. Until they do, the Labour Party will continue to defend male privilege and resist women's demands.

That goes, too, for the proposal for a new Department of Women's Rights. □

*'Labour's Macho Tendency'. *New Socialist*, September 1985.

TORIES LOSE ROUND ONE TO CRIES OF 'FOUL'

Next month, Labour hopes to hear that the TGWU, Britain's biggest union, has voted in favour of keeping a political fund. It's the culmination of the first phase of a campaign that has so far been a resounding defeat for the Tory view of unions. JOHN McILROY looks at where they got it wrong

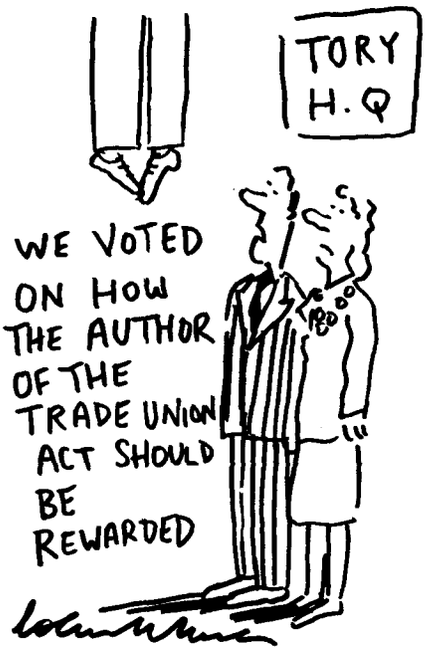
BRITAIN'S UNIONS have cause for at least mild euphoria. Fifteen unions — more than one-quarter of those affected — have now balloted their members on the maintenance of political funds as required by the 1984 Trade Union Act. The results are extremely surprising. The railway workers were 90 per cent in favour, the electricians' union voted by 84 per cent to retain the fund. Their turnout of 46 per cent was the highest in the union's history. The result in the engineering union was strikingly similar. More members voted than at any time since the General Strike.

The printing union, SOGAT, which unlike these unions balloted largely at the workplace rather than by post, secured an impressive 3:1 majority for maintaining political expenditure. The Iron and Steel Trades Federation with a right-wing complexion and relatively concentrated membership achieved an 87 per cent 'yes' vote on a massive 67 per cent turnout while in the Communist led Furniture Trades Union with widely dispersed membership more than 70 per cent were for continued investment in politics.

It is not only organisations with a Labourist tradition and manual background that have gladdened hearts at Walworth Road. The white collar APEX said 'yes' by 3:1 on a two-thirds vote. The giant GMB covering a very wide range of occupations and industries was 90 per cent for unions staying political, provoking General Secretary, David Basnett, to express his gratitude to the government for stimulating the best ray of hope in a movement wracked by recession, the miners' defeat and divisions within the TUC.

Thus far the ballots, which will run until the March 1986 deadline, have confounded the opinion polls — which claimed only a minority of unions would succeed in keeping the funds. With unions such as ASTMS, in the words of Clive Jenkins 'top of everybody's risk list', still to vote, there can be no grounds for complacency. But, if Britain's biggest union, the Transport and General Workers, goes with the trend, it will be possible to endorse the view of Labour's General Secretary, Larry Whitty, that the political fund initiative is one of the greatest mistakes the present administration has made.

What *was* entirely predictable was the Conservative response. Faced with the disintegration of their belief that plebiscitory democracy produced the 'right' results, that the union rank and file wanted out of political involvement fast, they have cried 'foul' with a



stridency only exceeded by Dr Owen.

Their allegations — leaving aside SDP fantasies about collusion between Fleet Street and the TUC — are threefold. They claim that the unions have disguised the central fact that most of the political fund goes to Labour, have exaggerated the scope of the legislation in order to suggest that unions would be unable to finance all kinds of necessary activities and that they have neglected to point out to their members their right not to pay a political contribution even if the fund is maintained.

THERE CAN be little doubt that the unions *have* played down the Labour Party connection. There are exceptions. Much of the AUEW literature was forthright about the relationship. NUPE has seen the ballot as an opportunity to strengthen the link. Certain regions of the TGWU, such as Scotland or the Northwest, have had no qualms in arguing that Labour is the indispensable focus of union political expenditure. But there are numerous examples of unions ducking the fact that almost their entire political expenditure goes in one way or another to Labour.

Right from the start, the unions were explicit about this approach. As Bill Keyes, chair of the union co-ordinating committee established to oversee the ballots, put it: 'We cannot over-emphasize that the ballots are about the retention of the political fund. They are not

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about affiliation to the Labour Party'. This is legally correct, as in order to spend money on Parliamentary political objectives a union has to have a political fund. Much of the fund is usually spent on affiliation to the Labour Party. But it could go on sponsoring MPs of any party.

For Mrs Thatcher, it was support for Labour that was the substantive issue. But the 1984 Act itself dealt *only with political funds not with party affiliation.* The Tories can surely have only themselves to blame if their attempt to cloak the partisan nature of *their* objective in legal technicalities has boomeranged.

While the unions' rhetoric about what they could not do might have been over the top, they could justifiably claim that a court might decide that 'the main purpose' of campaigns over rate-capping, CND or cuts, was to affect how people voted. Such campaigns would be legally at risk. For instance, the Court of Appeal found that the union campaign against the privatisation of British Telecom was actuated by political rather than industrial considerations.

IN REALITY the unions' success is based on far more than deft footwork. It can be attributed partly to the sea change in the political climate, with the polls now showing that almost 55 per cent of trade unionists would back Labour at a general election compared with 39 per cent in 1983. There is a strong mood in the unions that the government's legislation on the political fund was partisan and unfair. The twelve month period allowed for polling on the issue gave space for tactical exploitation. And the unions have taken full advantage of it with well thought out professional campaigns.

The success so far is an impressive illustration of the basic loyalty trade unionists give to their organisations and of what can be achieved when those leaders campaign wholeheartedly for backing. Unions have been willing to spend relatively large sums, approaching half a million pounds, on their publicity about the fund. But the real key to success was the role of activists in the workplace. While the use of literature, video and workshops has been powerful and imaginative, the emphasis has been on personal contact with the members by well-briefed activists, a preference for a direct drive into the office and factory rather than relying on formal district and branch structures.

Most importantly, the campaign has highlighted the lack of any real trade union base for the Conservative and Alliance parties. They could exhort from the sidelines; they lacked any organisation capable of mobilising members. It is true that the Conservative trade unionists were instructed not to campaign; it is unlikely they would have got anywhere if they had.

There has been uneasiness on the Left that the ballots were not used as a great opportunity to put an open and powerful case for socialist politics, party affiliation and the greater involvement of trade unionists in the Labour Party. Given the resources demanded for the campaign so far, many doubt whether there will be a more political Phase 2 follow-up. But without a more political approach the unions might find it harder to fight off another attack. The Tories may simply change the rules of the game and go back to the idea that trade unionists should be required to 'contract in', rather than 'contract out', of the political levy. □

Why don't you invest in our unit trusts?

The other day we had a letter from the Editor of the New Statesman, no less.

His aim, he said, was to shame us from our anti-left prejudices into advertising in the NS. He used two arguments. The first was a copy of the magazine for July 19 in which one of our rivals had advertised. This was the sort of irritant we could do without. But then he produced his Exocet: a copy of your most recent readership survey.

To our rage we saw that New Statesman readers are precisely the well educated and affluent people we would expect to become Framlington unitholders.

- ★ An amazing 67 per cent of you have degrees.
- ★ 7 per cent even have doctorates.
- ★ No less than 64 per cent own up to being home owners.
- ★ And 41 per cent have earnings in five figures.

Yet, as far as we know, virtually none of you puts your spare cash in Framlington unit trusts.

Admittedly only 18 per cent of you are aged 55 or over, which means that most of you have not yet had time enough to accumulate any capital.

But nearly all of you could profit from a Framlington Monthly Savings Plan, which you can start for as little as £20 per month. There's no contractual commitment to keep it going for a fixed time and no penalty when you cash it in: even if you changed your mind after just one month you would receive the full bid value of all the units invested.

To give you an idea of what can be achieved, consider Framlington Capital Trust. This is a fund investing in the shares of smaller British growth companies. £20 each month into this fund over ten years to 1st July would have been worth £10,016 for an outlay of £2,400.

Or contemplate Framlington American & General Fund. This fund buys shares in U.S. growth companies with the aim of selling them back at a profit so that the proceeds accumulate in the hands of our investors in Britain. £20 per month over 5 years into this fund would have grown into £2,116 for an outlay of £1,200.

Both these funds, together with eight others, are described in the Framlington Unit Trust Guide. The Savings Plan is set out in detail, and there is an application form. For your copy, simply send us your name and address.

To: Framlington, FREEPOST, London EC2B 2DL
(No stamp required)

Please send me a copy of the Framlington Unit Trust Guide

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NS

FRAMLINGTON

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HOW A VIRUS THAT IS VERY HARD TO CATCH CROSSED THE WORLD

If the myths around AIDS were as difficult to catch as the disease itself, preventive work would be much further advanced. JULIAN MELDRUM gives the facts behind the hysteria

TWO WEEKS AGO, a 29-year-old man with AIDS was detained for three weeks in an isolation unit at Manchester's Monsall hospital. This move by magistrates, acting in support of the City's Environmental Health Officer, Dr Jones, seriously threatens the credibility of the government's response to AIDS, at least so far as members of the principal British risk-group, gay men, are concerned.

The only thing to be said for it, from a strictly monetarist point of view, is that it will deter people who suspect they have AIDS from seeking medical advice and thus from incurring public expenditure. Calls for quarantines and other repressive measures are misplaced, entirely failing to acknowledge the scale and nature of the problem.

AIDS 'acquired immune deficiency syndrome' was originally defined by the presence of a serious illness due to an unexplained collapse in a part of the body's protection against disease, the cellular immune system. This commonly takes the form either of pneumonia, due to a parasite called *Pneumocystis carinii*, or of a purplish skin tumour called Kaposi's sarcoma. People with AIDS have an average life-expectancy of less than two years, although the disease can be intermittent and some have survived much longer. However, no person with AIDS has yet recovered the full use of his or her immune system.

On 28 June this year, four years after they first reported its existence, the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) altered their definition of AIDS to acknowledge the discovery of the virus which causes it. That virus, called HTLV-III, or ARV in the United States and LAV in France, is now known to have infected hundreds of thousands of people across the world, mostly within the last ten years.

The virus has been transmitted in blood, in semen and probably in human milk; it may also be present in saliva, faeces, urine and tears, though no one has been shown to contract it from these. Injection into the blood stream, or sexual exposure, is generally needed for transmission, and even then it is not highly infectious unless there is massive exposure.

There are fewer than 6,000 people with AIDS known to be living in the US, and only around 100 in Britain. But at least 500,000 people are estimated to have been infected with the virus and 10,000 to have produced antibodies to it. On limited evidence, around 10 per cent are expected to progress to AIDS within a few years. HTLV-III antibodies, unlike those induced by many viruses, do not clear the virus from the body. American studies show that from 50 per cent to 90 per cent or more of the people with antibodies are carrying the virus in their blood: *all* of them may be infectious to some extent.

It is this persistence, not ease of transmission, which explains how a very noninfectious virus has spread so rapidly to so many people.

A VIRUS VERY similar to HTLV-III has been found in African green monkeys in which it does not appear to cause illness. It is believed that the virus has only recently crossed over to human beings, probably transmitted by insects in rural Zaire or Uganda. Strangely, however, there is little evidence that it has given rise to AIDS in the countryside.

'It is the persistence of the virus, not ease of transmission, which explains its rapid spread'

The next step, perhaps 15 years ago, was the arrival of HTLV-III in Kinshasa and other urban centres. This went with a shift in the pattern of transmission from human to human, and, possibly, an increase in virulence. In urban Africa, HTLV-III is transmitted heterosexually and from mothers to their infants.

In Kinshasa, Kigali, Lusaka, and Nairobi, sexual transmission has affected the urban elite and especially those with the greatest numbers of sexual partners. HTLV-III may also have spread through the re-use of needles for medical injections — though the evidence for this is confined to one survey of Zairean hospital workers.

Had HTLV-III stayed in Africa, or at least among Africans, it would probably not have been identified by now. What gave it notoriety, and has made it the most intensively-researched communicable disease in the world, was its arrival in the US near to some of the world's best-equipped biomedical research facilities. Here it showed up as a sexually transmitted disease among gay men and a needle-transmitted infection of drug addicts, in a pattern remarkably like that of hepatitis B. By the middle of 1982, again like hepatitis B, AIDS had appeared among haemophiliacs using the blood-derived clotting agent, Factor VIII, and among other people having blood-transfusions.

The American pattern, repeated with minor variations in Britain and other wealthy industrial countries, has been stable for several years. Around 75 per cent of American AIDS cases are among gay men, 30 per cent in main-lining drug users. Only 2 per cent of American cases are related to blood transfusion and CDC has recently reported that the incidence of AIDS among severe haemophiliacs is declining; for a year the clotting agent, Factor VIII, has been subjected to heat treatment and for two years blood donors to more rigorous selection. As many as 1,000 cases are attributed to heterosexual and neonatal transmission in the US, but these are not yet increasing at anything like the pace in Africa.

THE THREAT TO public confidence in blood transfusion has driven the political response to AIDS in most Western countries. The 'public health' regulations invoked in Manchester were a panic measure seemingly brought on by fears that someone in hospital with AIDS would discharge himself and go off to give blood. The first British front-page newspaper stories appeared in 1983, when haemophiliacs were seen to be affected, rather than when the first AIDS case was reported in a gay man. The DHSS set up its Expert Advisory Group on AIDS only when it became known that HTLV-III had been transmitted from a British blood donor and its membership is weighted towards the blood transfusion service.

Across the country these services are shortly to introduce HTLV-III antibody tests, to be paid for from the existing budgets of Regional Health Authorities. Tens of millions of pounds have also been committed to making Britain self-sufficient in blood-products and for new testing facilities. At present, general testing facilities are only available in the blood transfusion service, but a 'positive' result, revealing the presence of antibodies, does not necessarily mean the donor has the HTLV-III virus. Similarly someone with the virus might not necessarily produce antibodies. Without testing facilities at, say, clinics for sexually transmitted diseases, 'high-risk' donors might give blood simply to find out their antibody status (and possibly transmit the virus while being antibody-negative).

There is an active debate within voluntary and gay organisations, and among doctors working in the field, over whether or not these tests have a place in a strategy for prevention, beyond the blood transfusion service. After all, no medical treatment is available, so the only

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means of prevention is through changing the behaviour of those at highest risk.

Where gay men are concerned, some argue that only the act of seeking a 'medical' test, however limited its meaning, can bring about the kind of personal commitment to change, whatever the result of that test, which will make a difference in the longer term to the course of the epidemic. Others question the ethics of screening for a condition for which no treatment is available. Worse still, a positive result may have a serious impact on a person's employment, housing, insurance and other services.

MOST OF THE health education work around AIDS has been undertaken by voluntary organisations such as the Terrence Higgins Trust. However, these organisations do not really know whether they are reaching and influencing their target audiences. In contrast to, say, the Netherlands, there has been very little research in this country on gay male sexuality in general, let alone on the psychological importance of particular sexual acts which would cause resistance to changing sexual habits. Similarly there has been next to no systematic research into the reasons why people do, or do not, inject themselves with street drugs.

Scientists at the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre predict that on present trends there will be 1,800 new cases of AIDS in the UK during 1988, with 700 survivors from previous years. Four or five times as many people are likely to consult a doctor for serious HTLV-III-related symptoms. They must have rapid access to properly equipped facilities.

Even while no treatment is available for HTLV-III disease, special provision is needed to guarantee dental and other services to people at risk of transmitting it. It has been proposed that anyone who might be infected with HTLV-III should go to dental hospitals, with waiting-lists of months for any but the most urgent operation. To equip and staff adequate units would cost large amounts of money which are simply not available to the regions which need them. This need is urgent, yet planning for it has hardly begun.

There is an unanswerable case for basic research into treatments and medical means of prevention, meaning antiviral and other drugs and, possibly, vaccines. The British budget for this, through the Medical Research Council, has so far been minuscule compared to the tens of million of dollars forced out of a reluctant US administration by Congress.

If treatments cannot be developed, or are not given to those who most need them, thousands of previously healthy young people will become physically and mentally disabled over the next few years, concentrated in inner-city areas where medical facilities are now being cut. These will be people, including children, of both sexes and all races regardless of their sexual orientation.

The only way to avoid this is to give massive public support right now to co-operative efforts between medical researchers, hospital doctors and voluntary organisations in research of a psychosocial as well as a medical nature, which will depend absolutely on the active and willing participation of those directly at risk from this disease. □

Julian Meldrum is health correspondent for Capital Gay.

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

Using the District Line, I have seen pigeons boarding the Underground trains at Edgware Road station and later, alighting at various points along the line. Fulham Broadway and Parson's Green seem to be favoured and also Putney Bridge if it is low water. — Letter in *The Times* (A Heigho)

A recently advertised 'Olde English Fete' near here has its organisers dressed in 'Olde Englande costumes'. Attractions include 'freefall parachute jumping' and 'unicycle displays'. — *The Times* (Wendy Abott)

'Perhaps one way of denying Mrs Thatcher the "oxygen of publicity" which she so obviously draws from major public tragedies, would be for us to carry little plastic cards stating that, should we survive such a disaster, we have no wish to be visited by her in hospital'. — Letter in the *Guardian* (Miss N. Mackie)

84th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LABOUR PARTY FRINGE MEETING

The Greater London Council and the Local Government Information Unit invite delegates and visitors to the following joint meeting:

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Chair: **MARGARET HODGE**
Leader, Islington Council

Speakers: **DAVID BLUNKETT**
Leader, Sheffield City Council Chair, LGIU

KEN LIVINGSTONE
Leader, GLC

FRANCES MORRELL
Leader, ILEA

ALISTAIR MACRAE
NUPE, National Local Government Officer

5.30 PM TUESDAY, 1 OCTOBER
WEDGWOOD ROOM, PAVILION THEATRE, WESTOVER ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH.

* Children Welcome
* Wheelchair Access
* Light Refreshments

Local Government is under threat – do you care what happens next?

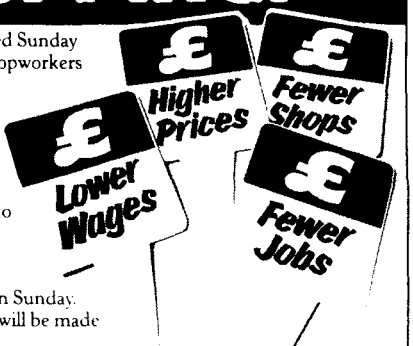
COME AND HEAR MORE

GLC Working for London LGIU

WHAT PRICE SUNDAY SHOPPING?

We know that unlimited Sunday trading will mean many shopworkers losing their jobs, because retailers will replace full-time staff with Sunday-only casual labour. Food shops, for instance, will sell less food during the week as some customers switch to Sunday bulk shopping.

Many small shops will close down once their big competitors open legally on Sunday. So workers in small shops will be made redundant.



Shop managers, supervisors etc., will be forced to work regular Sundays, as well as Saturdays, in order to supervise the casual staff. This will ruin the family and social life of permanent shopworkers, mostly married women.

Wages will fall as part-timers' hours are cut and other wagebill economies are made.

Prices, on the other hand, will rise as sales will not increase sufficiently to cover the costs of a shopkeeper opening for seven days a week rather than six.

Help USDAW in the fight against unlimited Sunday trading.
The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, 188 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M14 6LJ

USDAW

COME TO USDAW'S MEETING, WEDNESDAY OCT. 2ND 12·45PM, TRALEE HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH.

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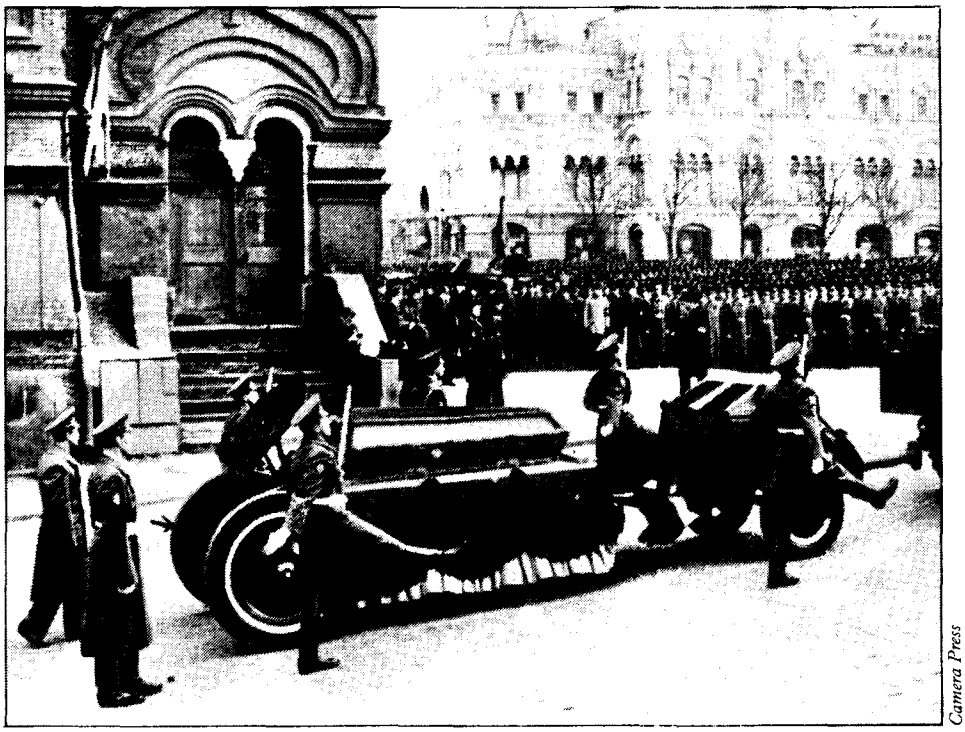
THE DAY THE 'DICTATOR' DIED



Camera Press

With the help of TV commentary we can see that this picture represents atheism, vast military expenditure, massive economic backwardness and the enemy out there

Bias in some TV broadcasts about the Cold War is revealed in 101 small ways. On the day that Brezhnev died, GREG PHILO, JOHN ELDRIDGE and KEVIN WILLIAMS recorded them all for the Glasgow University Media Group's new study*

DETERRENCE theory depends on the notion of an adversary, a potential enemy — phrases like 'the Soviet threat' have an easy resonance in the West. But if our imagination knows no bounds so that the adversary comes to be viewed as an all powerful and ever present threat, we run the risk of giving a blank cheque to anything that is done in the name of deterrence.

It is not our purpose here to offer a blanket defence of the Soviet Union's domestic or foreign policy. But it is clear that routine news accounts contain allegations which owe more to cold war rhetoric than to cool analysis.

A good illustration of this was provided when the President of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, died on 10 November 1982. In the reports of his death, on 11 November, there is an emphasis placed on the Soviet military build-up.

> A second arms limitation treaty (SALT II) was only signed after five long years of haggling and Russia's military might grew alarmingly. (*Channel 4 19.00, 11.11.82*)

On Brezhnev himself the same bulletin tells us

> President Brezhnev's place in history is assured. The man who advocated disarmament yet presided over the biggest military build-up the world has ever seen.

The military emphasis is repeated on the day of the funeral:

> Marshall Ustinov as Defence Minister has presided over an unprecedented military build-up. (*BBC1, 15.11.82*)

This phrase, uttered outside any context in which the arms race has taken place, assumes that the Soviet build-up is unprecedented and unique and implies that the USSR is *the* threat to world stability. Yet there are, of course, other views on the matter:

> America's oldest President, *who has put through the most gigantic peace-time build-up in this country's history*, has formed an amazing alliance with the nation's young warriors. (*The Mail on Sunday, 29.1.84.* Our italics)

When the contradictions emerge, they can be avoided or ignored by journalists. In the same bulletin there is an interview with Armand Hammer, the head of Occidental Petroleum. He has been going to the Soviet Union for many years and knew Brezhnev personally. He says of him:

> He was a great force for peace — he would give his life for peace as he told me . . .

This raises the central question of whether the Soviet Union was genuinely interested in defusing the arms race. If this was so, then how could it be reconciled with the reports on extensive arms expenditure ('over one eighth of its national income . . . about twice the proportion of most Western countries', according to the same bulletin.)

But the contradiction is not faced. Instead the journalist moves into a familiar tangent — the lifestyle of a socialist leader. The next question he asks is about cars:

> Did he have a lifestyle which was inconsistent with the normal one of Soviet leaders — one hears that he had a fleet of cars for instance. Did he have an austere or a luxurious lifestyle by Soviet standards?

Brezhnev, himself was an exponent of the thesis that the Soviet Union was 'encircled' and threatened by the west. In an interview, given in 1981 he had said: 'Imagine yourself in our position. Could we indifferently regard how they were besieging us on all sides with military bases, how increasing numbers of carriers of nuclear death, irrespective of what form — missiles from the sea or land, air bombs, etc. — were targeted from various areas of Europe on the Soviet cities and factories.'

Writing on this, Ewyn Prins and his colleagues of the Cambridge University Disarmament Seminar concluded: 'The fact is that the Soviet Union and its allies confront a Western alliance with far greater economic power, with superior technology, and with a greater and more varied deployment of military force around the world'. This view does not surface on the main stream of television news at this time. But room is made to comment on the economic ills of the system in the USSR.

Of course one of the reasons given for low economic growth in the Soviet Union might be its military spending. ITN had acknowledged that:

> Brezhnev, with a flagging economy and a perennial grain shortage did not want an arms race with the United States. (*ITN 22.0, 11.11.82*)

But if the premise of technological backwardness is endorsed, there must be limits to what the Soviet Union is achieving. The argument of military superiority does not flow easily. Is the Soviet Union superior in computer technology, for example, upon which so much of modern weaponry depends? Again Channel 4 news told us:

> the crisis which erupted in Poland in 1980 leading to the emergence of Solidarity revealed the chronic economic ills of the entire Soviet system. (*Channel 4, 19.99, 11.11.82.*)

So the occasion of Mr Brezhnev's death becomes an opportunity to castigate the entire system. If Soviet television were to report that the debt crisis of Mexico (which is considerably worse then Poland's) reveals the chronic economic ills of the entire capitalist system, many in the West would dismiss it as cheap propaganda. But this reminds us that facts and observations are routinely put in an interpretive framework. By such means attempts are made to render the world intelligible to us.

The perspective of a Soviet empire, ruled by a dictator clearly emerges in the accounts:

> Leonid Illyich Brezhnev, arguably the most powerful man in the world, is dead. He'd ruled Russian for 18 years. For most of that time he was undisputed leader of 260 million people in the Soviet Union and controlled the destiny of 120 million others in Russia's eastern empire. (*BBC1 21.00, 11.11.82.*)

But the sentiments, attitudes and images were

**War and Peace News* is published by Open University Press this week.

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deployed to their fullest extent in ITN's description of the funeral as the following transcript reveals:

> They came to Red Square today to bury Brezhnev and not particularly to praise him. All who were there were there by official invitation . . . His old friends had come: Indira Gandhi, who spoke her mind, and the clients who didn't: Jaruzelski from Poland, Castro from Cuba and Yasser Arafat. And Andropov spoke. Andropov and the Prime Minister . . . carried the coffin and his widow Victoria, his daughter and his son said goodbye in an older ritual than the atheistic State allowed . . . It may be that the future will say that Brezhnev's chief achievement was to create nothing but a Soviet navy. (*ITV 22,00, 15.11.82*)

We had already been told of the reception at the Kremlin:

> Intent on being there were the Polish puppet, General Jaruzelski . . . and also Cuba's bearded Fidel Castro. Their new master was holding a party. One of the few non-communist faces Soviet viewers would recognise was Mrs Gandhi, with Afghanistan on her mind, and she bowed to Brezhnev's picture. (*ITN, 22.00, 15.11.82*)

The newscaster's description brought together in one passage a mixture of indictment, speculation and, in the end, contradiction. 'The older ritual than the State allowed' was manifestly performed at the State funeral. Yet all of this is offered as a direct statement by a journalist and leaves any concept of impartiality in shreds. To its credit Channel 4's *Friday Alternative* gave a sharp critique of this coverage, questioning the use of terms like puppet, dictator and empire. It was pointed out that when General Franco died ITN had used language rather differently: 'Franco gave the Spaniards the stability they needed' (quoted on *Friday Alternative 18.11.82*)

The *Friday Alternative*'s report appeared to have its effect. When Mr Andropov died in 1984, words like puppet and dictator were no longer used. Instead of clients the ITN news talks of allies. Instead of juxtaposing atheism against religion we are simply told that 'Mr Andropov's wife, dressed in black, followed Russian tradition and kissed her husband for the last time, (*ITN 22.00 14.2.84*)

In the great volume of words that pour out of news programmes day by day such linguistic changes may seem small. But they do signify a growing debate within news rooms and a commitment by some journalists to reporting news events in a way which does not reinforce the cold war.

Some may object that to allow such critical scrutiny in the 'sensitive' area of defence is dangerous and even subversive. But there is a growing belief in some parts of broadcasting that such an approach should be developed. The programme *Kabul Autumn*, shown on Channel 4 in December 1984 is a good example. It contrasted television images of the Afghan war in the West with those in the Soviet Union.

> Back in the USSR, viewers get an entirely different perspective of the Afghan war. While the West sees pictures of gunships and Mojahadeen attacks. Soviets are shown a war against poverty, ignorance and disease . . . We in the West don't hear much about the torture and mutilation of civilians by the Mojahadeen. By the same token Soviet television doesn't broadcast the fact that while many children will live because of Soviet doctors and nurses, others will die from Soviet bombs. The media are locked into their respective cold war attitudes.

A pessimistic view would argue that the constraints on broadcasters are so powerful and their own professional codes so deep-rooted that any change is impossible. We do not think so. Those who produce media output may be constrained by powerful forces but they are not totally determined by them. They can and should point to the alternatives. □

The authors are members of The Glasgow University Media Group.

RACISM

STRIKE AGAINST HARASSMENT

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR looks back on a pioneering action

A STRIKE BY 400 Islington council workers over a case of racial harassment has been hailed as a pioneering anti-racist action. It also threw up a lot of worrying problems, failed to win widespread support and left the question of how best to tackle racial harassment without a clear answer.

Last April, five members of the council's rent accounts section appeared before a council disciplinary hearing charged with various counts of racial harassment. Stephen Henney, Irene Pledger and Vi Howell were found guilty. The first two were reprimanded and given warnings. Ms Howell was cautioned and recommended to attend a racism awareness course.

But should public servants found guilty of racism under council procedures work with the public? Four months before the hearing, Ms Howell had been offered a job in the Quadrant neighbourhood office and the council refused to withdraw it. Sally Gilbert, its Personnel Committee chair, says: 'She had already been punished through the council's disciplinary procedures and it wouldn't have been fair to put her in double jeopardy by punishing her again.'

NALGO were prepared to accept this if Ms Howell would give an assurance that she would work within the council's Equal Opportunities Policies and would acknowledge that her previous behaviour had been racist. She was ready to give the first acceptance and had already attended a two day racism awareness course; but she would not give the second. She had protested her innocence throughout. On this basis, NALGO said they would refuse to work with her. In response, Ms Gilbert threatened anyone supporting a boycott with disciplinary action.

On 5 August, the day the Quadrant office was supposed to open, 400 neighbourhood office staff went on strike. Sally Gilbert quickly dropped the threat of disciplinary action. But after five weeks, NALGO failed to gain any concession over Ms Howell and because of the lack of any support from any other town hall union, it conceded defeat.

OBVIOUSLY THE strike was not simply about the offence committed by Vi Howell. The background, in the words of a report by the libraries' shop stewards' committee, was the 'deliberate, sustained and organised harassment of a number of black staff such that the (rent accounts section) became untenable for those staff'. Indeed, four black employees had been forced to leave rent accounts, the last with the active collusion of NALGO and the council, neither of whom then took any action to stem the tide of racism. As the report puts it: 'no-one emerges from this with any credit and management, NALGO and the council are all to a degree responsible for what subsequently happened'.

During the strike, NALGO claimed that allowing Ms Howell to work with the public broke the council's equal opportunities policy. It may have broken its spirit, but not its letter. The complaints and disciplinary procedures necessary to enforce the policy have not been agreed on. Instead the cases were brought under the council's normal disciplinary procedure, which was clearly inadequate, not least because of the difficulty of obtaining witnesses willing to testify. Since the cases were brought, ashtrays have been emptied on people's desks, anti-racist posters torn down, NF scrawled on cars and, most seriously, a man sat in a car sharpening a knife for several hours outside one of the witnesses' house.

NALGO argued that Ms Howell's case was just the tip of the iceberg. The problem was that there was evidence that Vi Howell was not, in the words of NALGO branch secretary Dave Burn 'as bad as the others' and that she did not support their activities. NALGO claims that the council made the case seem trivial by not bringing forward the more serious cases. Ms Gilbert replies that those who had witnessed more serious offences were not prepared to repeat their evidence in a formal hearing.

THE ACTUAL GROUND on which NALGO had to end up taking its stand was, in the end, found to be too shaky. The *Daily Mail*, inevitably, portrayed the three as Snow Whites harassed by their evil black workmates. More importantly, other unions did not provide any active support and NALGO's own members, with the exception of the women's and ethnic minorities' units, stayed at work. (The chief race relations officer, Richard Crowson, didn't support the strike.) Matsa, the white collar section of GMBATU to which Vi Howell belongs, threatened industrial action if she *were* moved.

Nevertheless, as Andy Glasgow of the council's Black Workers' Group put it, 'until we went on strike, people didn't believe this sort of harassment went on. Now those who suffer harassment will be much more prepared to come forward.' The council is suggesting, as part of the new procedures, that different types of harassment should be dealt with. Andy Glasgow accepts this but stresses: 'Black people must have the right to determine what harassment is'.

But what is clearly lacking both from the council and the union is any attempt to create an atmosphere of positive anti-racism such that racists feel it is they who are out of step with the prevailing ethos and not the other way round. The strike has done more to raise this issue than countless resolutions. □

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MEDIA

Left takes itself to the laundry

ANNE KARPF

THERE WAS a time, not long gone, when the merest mention of 'media training' brought a Keatsian pallor to left-wing cheeks. It was all very well for balding execs or rising technocrats to take themselves off to centres for media training, to be schooled in the art of disarming Robin Day or side-stepping Sue Lawley, but for socialists ideological purity forbad such co-option.

What's more — went the common line — it didn't work. The media were intractable, out to rubbish the Left even if it did don a tie or a skirt. The notion that you could get the media to love you by doing a course on how to play their game was so much right-wing humbug.

Times have changed. There's now the sound, on the Left, not just of words being eaten, but of shop stewards signing up for media training courses. Media training is becoming very popular in trade unions. What has brought about the change? Mike Roberts, co-founder of 'Frameworks'*, a collective which, with the Television Co-operative, helps train trade unions and Left groups in media skills and to plan publicity campaigns, attributes part of the shift to Margaret Thatcher.

'There's been a growing realisation on the Left that the Right have been using modern communication skills, from market research to good design, opinion polls, and good writing to get their message across, and that if the Left doesn't match up, it'll get screwed. Of course presentation can't fool all the people all the time, and Mrs Thatcher's cosmetics have washed off'.

'Frameworks' was founded a year ago by Roberts, a journalist with broadcasting experience who had worked for the Labour Party, and the TV Co-op, a collective of media professionals making videos for the Left. Clients so far include the Labour Party, the GLC, Leicester City Council, the NUJ, and BETA (Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance).

Dissuasion as well as persuasion is necessary: with the Left's infatuation with print, there's a belief in the almost magical powers of half-a-million leaflets, even though 200,000 of them may languish in someone's basement at the end of the campaign.

Media training is only part of what they do. Says Roberts: 'Just teaching people how to perform better when the media come to them can be cosmetic and reactive. We're equally, if not more, concerned to help organisations develop a strategy for getting their point of view across on their terms, rather than the media's terms. And of course media training is only a part of an integrated, coherent approach to political presentation'.

The GLC is the British Left's success story in using the media. Not just the personal skills of Ken Livingstone ('He's the only politician who can talk about class struggle with a smile on his face,' says Roberts), but their concerted, inventive poster advertising campaigns are held up as examples of marrying the slick with the radical.

In America, they're further down this path: the Public Media Center, a public interest advertising agency in San Francisco, applies Madison Avenue techniques to feminist, socialist, and anti-nuclear causes, while the Public Interest Video Group, based in Washington, DC, is helping progressives develop television skills, by training groups to present themselves on camera and produce their own programming.

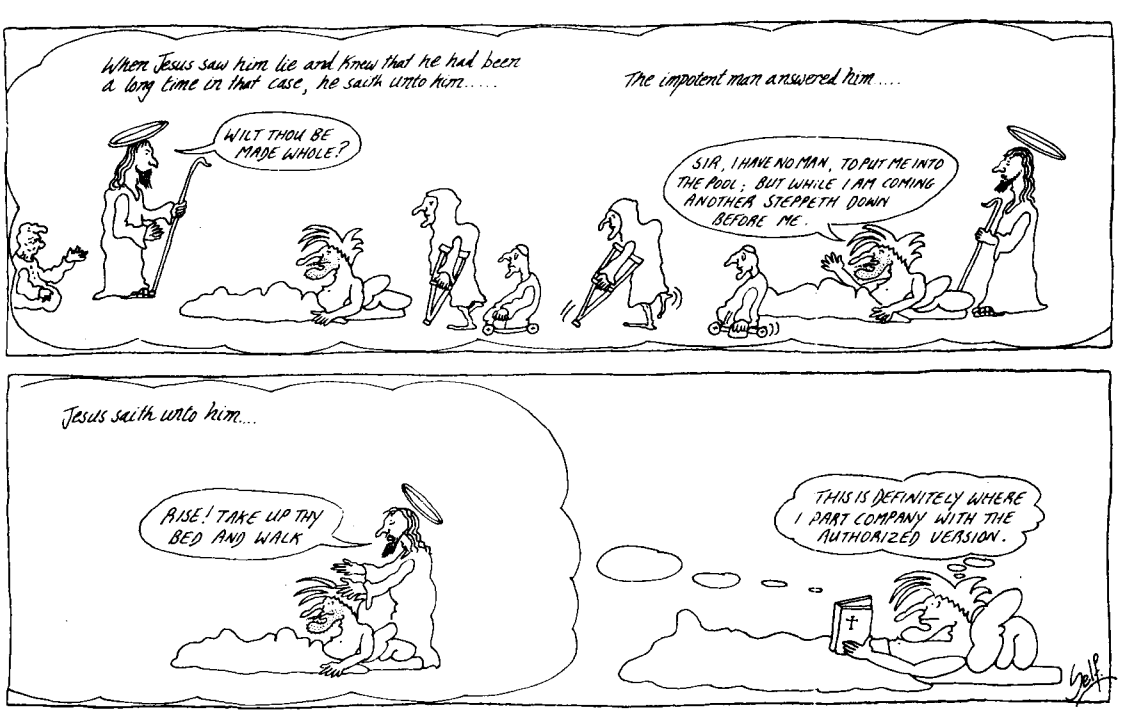
But this approach isn't without pitfalls. Says Roberts: 'There's a danger of modifying your policies, and ending up telling people what they want to hear. There's always a tension and a dialectic between the politics and the presentation, and in a way that's healthy. Unlike a commercial advertising agency, we always come down on the side of the politics'.

Can all messages be prettified for media consumption? Fledgling radical journalists learn to substitute 'industrial' for 'capitalist' and 'discrimination' for 'patriarchy', but many a group has watched their campaign founder because its ideology is simply incompatible with dominant media thinking and there's just no way that their beliefs can be translated into acceptable mediaspeak.

Would it have helped the miners if their shop stewards had done courses on reframing the question? The cards were obviously stacked against them, and no amount of tinkering could have shifted the coverage. Clearly, media training has its limitations: though 'Frameworks' believes that — at their most successful — they can help groups shift the agenda of debate through a combination of better timing, technique and tone, and they'd be the first to agree that it can't get at the structural determinants of media coverage. To deny this is to risk blaming the victims for poor media representation.

But if media training is no panacea, it's no bad thing that the Left is awakening to the importance of presentation, and not dismissing all such interventions as matters of style instead of substance. The Left may be emerging from the media dark age: as Mike Roberts says, 'We have to recognise that the media won't go away, even if you don't talk to them'. □

*'Frameworks', 195 Walworth Road, London SE17 1RP. Tel: 01-701 8262.


When Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been a long time in that case, he saith unto him.....
WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?
The impotent man answered him....
SIR, I HAVE NO MAN, TO PUT ME INTO THE POOL: BUT WHILE I AM COMING ANOTHER STEPPETH DOWN BEFORE ME.
Jesus saith unto him....
ARISE! TAKE UP THY BED AND WALK
THIS IS DEFINITELY WHERE I PART COMPANY WITH THE AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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DIARY

David Edgar

In the rush to compare Handsworth with the partially-equivalent events of 1981, a note of caution should be sounded. Even as Toxteth smouldered, disturbances there and in Moss Side were being conflated with those of Brixton and Southall. The latter 'riot' was in fact particularly distinct, as it consisted of Asian youths defending their community not against the police but what amounted to a commando assault by fascists. What divides one conflagration from another is not always (and in the above case, not at all) a matter of making moral distinctions. But no doubt the coloursupps are already thinking about their year-end capsules and, equally certainly, they will be tempted over-easily to conflate (for instance) the violence of young unemployed blacks against the police in Birmingham with that of largely employed young whites against their Italian equivalents in Brussels. In such careless analogising — the odd miners' picket no doubt tossed in as well — is forced the facile demagogy of the 'Argentinian Within'.

○

The Southall syndrome has been at its grossest, however, in the lumping together of the Brussels football violence with the Bradford fire. Within 48 hours of the latter tragedy, Leon Brittan was outraging local opinion by his linking of the fire with a hooligan-related fatality in Birmingham (under the terms of reference of the Popplewell Inquiry). In the last month, the *Listener* has run two features in which the convenient alliterative potential of 'Bradford, Birmingham and Brussels' was allowed to obscure the not unobvious distinctions between those three events.

But the biscuit must go to the *Sunday Times* editorial comment — post-Bradford but *before* Brussels — that British football is 'a slum sport played in slum stadiums and increasingly watched by slum people, who deter decent folk from turning up'. I happen to have personal reasons to know that at least one family who died were as far as it's possible to be from being 'slum people' — the father was a sales manager of a newsagent's chain, his widow is a policewoman, one child was in the Boys' Brigade, the other in the girls' equivalent and on her way to nine O levels. But, even setting that aside (other victims included two accountants, a journalist and a deputy school head), the idea that it was somehow the Bradford victims' *fault* that they were sitting in a locked deathtrap ('decent folk' no doubt would have commissioned their own safety report on the ground) lies behind both the *Sunday Times* piece and the amazing statement by the club chairman that responsibility for the fire lay with the smoker whose cigarette may have ignited the mountains of combustible rubbish the club had allowed to accumulate beneath the stand.

So let us be absolutely clear that, whatever one's view of the culpabilities of supporters at Heysel and St Andrews, what happened at Valley Parade was that 56 innocent people — including some, no doubt, who were perfectly legally smoking cigarettes, in defiance neither of instruction nor convention — were the victims of what it strains the sinews of understatement to describe as sloppy housekeeping by the owners of the ground in which they died.

○

Observing the strange muteness of the press response to the specificities of Handsworth, I'm beginning to wonder if the rhetoric of race is not undergoing a subtle shift. One of the characteristics of press comment on the events of the last six months — including the *Sunday Times* leader — is a growing willingness to attack not just black or Asian but working-class culture as a whole, in a manner hitherto the preserve of self-appointed enragers of the liberal bourgeoisie like, say, Auberon Waugh. Now it's become quite common, for instance, to see articles attacking 'the glorification' of 'proletarian culture' (I quote from a *Sunday Telegraph* piece entitled 'The Shame of the British Abroad'), which connect drunkenness and hooliganism with musical taste, style of dress and even political affiliation. The pundits of Peterhouse have long insisted on the Honeyford Principle — the right to be insulting about black and Asian culture. Now the new class Waughfarers are extending the principle to embrace the entire working class. How simply spiffing it must be to be able to be rude about the proles again.

○

For reasons too baroque to explain, I had this summer both the opportunity and the professional excuse to read (for the first time) Mr William S. Shirer's 1,400-page *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. As always when reading about the Nazi dictatorship, I was struck by the banality not just of the evil performed, but of the titles of its instruments. While 'SA' actually does mean 'stormtroopers', there is something almost bland about Schutzstaffel (SS), which means nothing more sinister than 'Defence Corps', and, indeed, about its subdivision — the

Verfugungstruppe or 'Reserve Force'. The Einsatzgruppen, who murdered upwards of two million people in the wake of the Eastern German Armies, were literally just 'action groups' performing 'special tasks'. I was strongly reminded of this form of euphemism when reading Enoch Powell's latest peroration. It seems a matter of policy now that Powell's speeches on race no longer contain the ringing rhetorical flourishes of yore. But in a way it's even more chilling to read a speech that will not be remembered for 'grinning piccaninnies' or 'rivers of blood', but rather for its demand that 'all the organisational resources of government' should be employed in order that 'sufficient proportions' of black and Asian people might be 'enabled' to depart.

○

The Arts Council is concerned that local authorities and their arts agencies may not fully take up the burdens compulsorily removed from the metropolitan counties. I am presently working, in Dorset, on a project which will involve upwards of 500 people in a play — presented and (I hope) written to the highest standards — about their own community. This is the seventh such project mounted by the Colway Theatre Trust, of which the playwright Ann Jellicoe is director. South West Arts have just halved Colway's grant, from the pretty miserly £20,000 per annum to £10,000, on the grounds of increased calls on its purse. I think the Arts Council is right to be concerned about the future.

○

If Julian Beck can be said to have served a community then it was the global village. Exiled from Amerika (the spelling comes naturally) Beck, his collaborator Judith Malina and their troupe lived a nomadic existence in Europe and the world, arriving at the Roundhouse in the summer of 1969. A very recent graduate from a university drama department, I had finally convinced myself that the theatre was irretrievably hidebound in the tradition of apolitical, psychologist naturalism. Beck's Living Theatre smashed right through that assumption, making my summer, and in many ways my career. By all accounts something of a monster Julian Beck was nonetheless one of the major theatre artists of his era. His death is a great loss.

ROGER WODDIS

French dressing

Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour en noir est arrivé.
Contre nous, dans une grande manie,
L'étendard Greenpeace est levé,
Et la France est déshonorée.
Entendez-vous dans toute la presse
Une voix qui pardonne une erreur?
Ils nous accusent de la terreur,
Et soutiennent la Nouvelle-Zélande.
Aux armes, citoyens!
Gardez le Président!
Mentons, mentons,
Sauvez surtout
La tête de Mitterrand!

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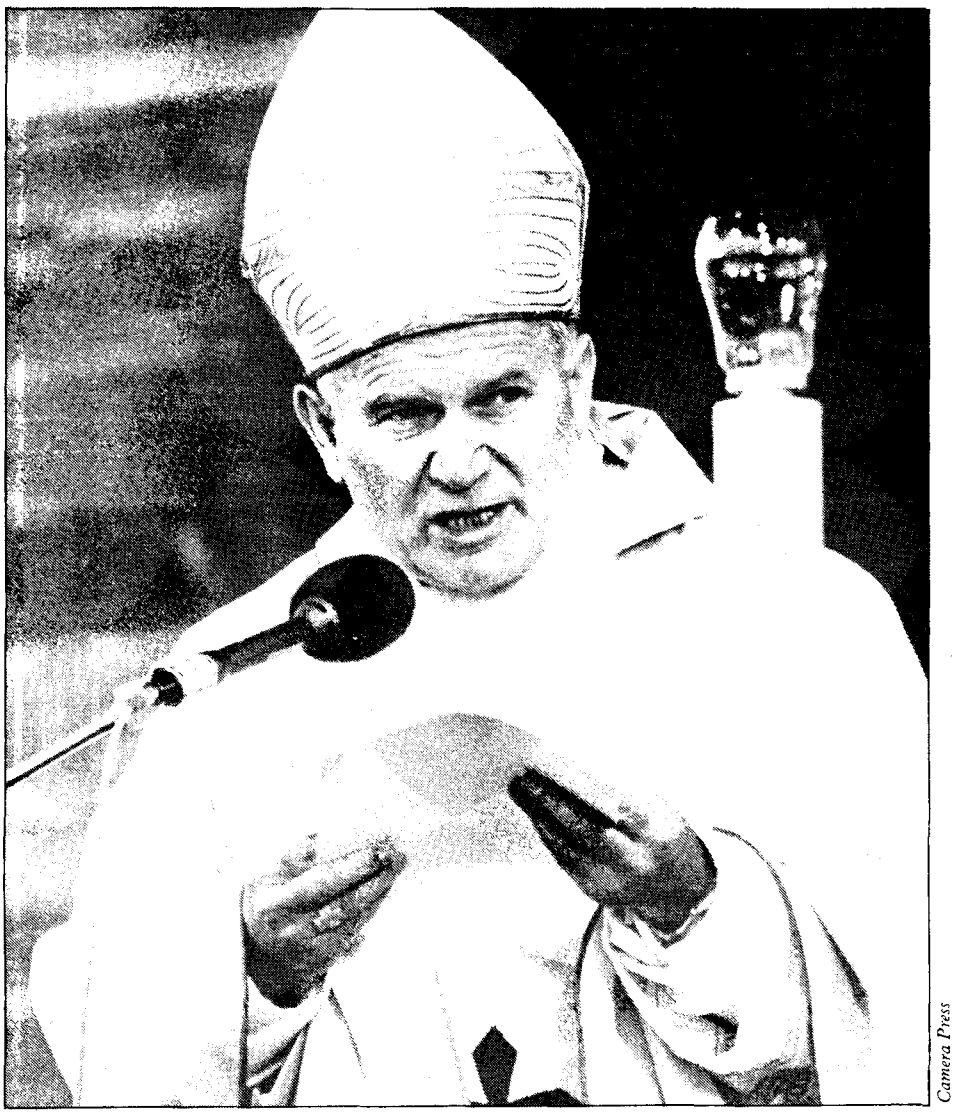

Camera Press

POPE STAMPS OUT DEVIL OF REFORM

He appeals to the poor, his mission is reactionary — he's a typical fundamentalist writes T. M. PASCA

Rome

TO COMPARE Pope John Paul II with the Ayatollah Khomeini and his Ziha Moslem zealots may seem like an exaggeration. But they have a lot in common.

They are both religious fundamentalists. They both represent hitherto unfashionable but well established elements in their respective religions. They both have it in for their more sophisticated co-religionists. They both believe that compromise, flexibility, seeing other points of view are forms of weakness that lead to the betrayal of the one true faith. And *they* define what that is. They also associate such weakness with democracy, which they look upon with suspicion. And then there is sex, which they dwell upon with various degrees of puritanism and are skilled in politicising.

But the Pope is in a class by himself. His advantage is that he leads a church and a faith that has been the carrier of much of the history of Europe, its philosophy, literature and art, and which has had influences of the most progressive kind in many parts of the globe that we now call the Third World. Catholicism's fundamentalism, therefore, is more familiar and acceptable in the West than that of foreign, smaller or less well-established faiths and Pope John Paul II tends not to be recognized as a fundamentalist.

Many non-Catholics, Protestants in particular, view him with a mixture of hope and awe. This is also because he has such good anti-communist credentials, earned under a Communist government where the Roman Catholic Church has been spectacularly successful in keeping the Polish people facing westwards.

In the Anglo-Saxon countries many see Karol Wojtyla as refreshingly forthright, informal and human after centuries of Italian popes who were considered closed, sly and Machiavellian. Ironically, but not surprisingly, those who do not hold such views and who are increasingly alarmed by the Pope are to be found among liberal Catholics, especially the hierarchy and the clergy. In al countries they are upset, first of all, by John Paul II's efforts to set back and dismantle the advances resulting from the Second Vatican Council while at the same time saying how important and permanent he considers the Council to have been — except for certain 'excesses' that developed from it inadvertently.

Pope John Paul II and his supporters stand for a restoration, in effect, a counter-reformation movement. Implicit in this is their belief that the Council was part of what they consider an avalanche of social and political 'mistakes and troubles' characteristic of the chaotic years of the 1970s in Western Europe and North America.

Their conservative admirers outside of the Catholic faith also understand that such an approach, based on old-time religion, combined with populism, supports political movements on the right. Sometimes — for instance during his travels in Latin America — John Paul II will criticise broadly and in general terms the failure of reactionary govenments to respond to the needs of the poor and the oppressed people who are all around them — and him. However, at the same time he reminds these people — his people — that they must bear their burdens patiently, for the real future is in the next world.

Catholicism's social consciousness and involvement has lagged far behind that of Protestantism, many of whose leading thinkers were relating Christian tenets to an increasingly democratic social climate more than a century ago. While the Protestants were adapting, the Catholic church was stressing the importance of not adapting. In 1870, the year the church lost Rome to the newly unified Italian state, Pius IX declared papal infallibility on articles of faith. He was followed from 1903 to 1914 by Pius X who is remembered for his successful crusade against the plague of 'modernism' among the clergy in Europe.

John Paul II identifies with these two popes in particular. This is clear from his own statements, those of persons close to him and certain official moves of the Vatican. He is orchestrating a campaign against 'neo-modernism', which is what he means by references to the 'excesses' that he sees as having followed from the Second Vatican Council.

By the 1960s, when John XXIII introduced Vatican II, he and many others were convinced that Catholicism was withering on the vine. Many Catholics no longer took their church seriously. Vocations had decreased sharply. And there was the whole question of the future role of the church in the Third World — especially in Latin America — where, by the year 2000, most Catholics will be living.

VATICAN II, therefore, aimed at bringing the church up-to-date, not least of all in social

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consciousness while strengthening the faith in the process.

The Council lasted from 16 October 1962 to 8 December 1965. There were always many, especially in the Vatican, who were intensely suspicious of it. If they went along with Vatican II, it was because it was decreed and supported by two Popes, John XXIII and Paul VI. And also because it was the tenor of the times. However, already under Paul VI, who was famous for indecision and second thoughts, the roll-back was beginning. It gained momentum with the election of John Paul II in October 1978.

In the struggle between John Paul II and the liberals who represent Vatican II the issues are all related. These are among the main ones:

● The Council gave considerable independence of action to the national episcopates and the Pope is now trying in various ways to withdraw or curtail this independence.

● The Council gave strong support to the ecumenical movement, especially between Catholics, Protestants and Jews, and, as an offshoot of this, to dialogues with atheists.

● The Ostpolitik was launched from Rome at the same time and under the same spirit as that of the Council. It was also an expression of the East-West detente that grew from the realisation during the 1960's that the nuclear arms competition was reaching uncontrollable proportions.

● The Liberation Theology movement that linked social and political reform to religious and moral principles and based this on Catholic theology and on church history and tradition was born in Latin America immediately after Vatican II, in the early 1970s, and it quickly spread. It is now the dominant Catholic movement in Brazil, the largest and most important Catholic country in Latin America.

THE WORLD SYNOD of Bishops that is to take place in Rome from 25 November to 8 December is intended as a major step in John Paul II's effort to roll back Vatican II. Obviously, the Council, which affected the structure of the church as well as theological interpretation, cannot be changed in two weeks.

In fact, the bishops are not being asked to Rome to engage in discussion but rather to listen and learn how the Pope would like them to re-interpret the Council according to his thinking. But the Synod will also present the perfect opportunity for those who do not agree with John Paul II to meet each other. There will be caucuses of this kind all over Rome.

In preparation for the Synod, the Vatican sent a set of questions to the various national episcopates. These were designed to sample their thinking and also to identify more accurately the hard and soft elements among the national churches and also refine what the Vatican already knew about whom they could and could not count upon for support.

The Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales sent back their answers to these questions in July and it was clear that they constitute a hard liberal element. The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, a Benedictine monk, who signed the submission as president of the English and Welsh Conference of Bishops, is also the president of the European Conference of Bishops. His stand therefore is expected to be important within the national episcopates of Western Europe, North America and English speaking Third World countries.

Probably the most touchy point in the English-Welsh submission deals with the need for reform of regulations for priests who wish to marry. On this, little sympathy can be expected from John Paul II, as those who bring the matter up are perfectly aware. About a year ago the liberal Brazilian Franciscan Cardinal Paoulo Evaristo Arns sent the Pope a letter on behalf of a number of his fellow priests who were or wanted to be married, asking for a more understanding attitude. Such was the Pope's rage that, after reading the first page, and in the presence of witnesses, he tore the letter up. Within the Vatican John Paul II's irascible temper is well-known.

The Pope faces a major difficulty in that his efforts to move the church backwards while saying that he is taking it forward must be justified with theological arguments and historical interpretations — and his opponents have some of the best theologians and historians on their side. He has the most authoritarian one, though, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who heads the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — formerly the Holy Office, for four centuries before that the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition. But authoritarian is not the same as authoritative.

Earlier this year an article entitled 'History 111-Treated' by the French Catholic historian Professor Jean Delumeau was featured prominently in *Le Monde* (22 June). It exposed Cardinal Ratzinger's fundamentalism as it appears in a recently published book that is being promoted by the Vatican, *Rapporto sulla fede* (Report on the Faith), which consists of a lengthy interview with the Cardinal by the Italian journalist Vittorio Messori.

'Christianity', wrote Delumeau, 'is doctrine, but it is also history ... However, in reading the work of Joseph Ratzinger we discover to our astonishment that the author is ill at ease with history. he maltreats it or erases it.' Cardinal Ratzinger says that 'in an evolutionary hypothesis of the world there is evidently no room for original sin.' 'Does the Cardinal take the same line' asked Delumeau, 'as the American fundamentalists who insist that evolution not be taught in schools? Is a Catholic obliged, in order to believe in redemption, to deny the scientific theory of evolution?'.

But you do not have to be a professor of history in order to understand that John Paul II's Catholicism is fundamentalism, with all that that implies. It is enough, really, to be brought up in Catholic countries, such as those of mediterranean Europe. For example, it was natural that, soon after the Ayatollah Khomeini became a world symbol of religious fundamentalism and political intransigence, ordinary Italians were referring to John Paul II as 'our Ayatollah'.

And without disrespect. They simply knew about such things. □

T.M. Pasca is an American journalist in Rome, who writes about the Vatican for The Nation *in New York.*

SOUTH AFRICA

BOTHA NOT FIT FOR BUSINESS

HOWARD BARRELL reports on the strategy of ANC leaders as the alternative government

Harare

SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT P. W. Botha's 'non-verbal leakage', said the anonymous psychiatrist, revealed a 'truculent, defiant, childlike' national leader. The psychological profile, he added, was 'frighteningly unreassuring'.

The significance of the psychiatrist's conclusions lies less in its content than in who commissioned his study of Botha. It was South Africa's premier business publication, the *Financial Mail*. In the same issue (6 Sept), the *Financial Mail* demanded in an editorial on behalf of South African capital that Botha institute immediate and far-reaching political reforms: 'All we have to say is do it, and go. And, if you can't bring yourself to do it, go anyway.'

To head off the rising tide of revolution in South Africa, the business community is, consequently, considering some fairly radical political options, as the meeting two weeks ago in Zambia with leaders of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) indicates. There is a growing view in the business world — indeed in Botha's own ruling National Party as well — that Botha and his cabinet have not got the intelligence required to take political initiatives to create a climate in which capitalism can reasonably expect to maintain its hold on South Africa's economic foundations in the future.

Despite Botha's bellicose denials that he had approved the meeting between big business and the ANC, well-placed sources confirm he did, indeed, give the talks a nod and a wink in advance. That is progress. But Botha, according to political sources in his own party, is gripped by political paralysis. One reason for this is that he regards the ANC as too powerful.

More South African notables — black and white — are due to follow the group of white business leaders, who were led by Gavin Relly, chair of the Anglo American Corporation. The Lusaka pilgrimage is coming into vogue. A reluctant Reagan Administration, it is reliably understood, is now also in line for a formal chat with the ANC.

FOR ITS PART, the ANC was supposed to have been dealt a fatal blow in March last year by the Nkomati accord between the South African and Mozambican governments — or so Botha would have had the world — and particularly his restless black population — believe. The opposite has, however, proven the case.

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In the first six months of this year, the number of attacks in the low-intensity guerilla war being waged by the ANC's military wing, exceeded the total for the current black revolt, and its songs and slogans are the battle cries. Not surprisingly, the business world now reckons it is the ANC it will be dealing with in the not too distant future. The ANC is mature enough to realise the converse is also true.

In line with the traditional structure of a national liberation movement, the ANC embraces a fairly broad ideological spectrum. Logically, the strategy of big businss and the Western governments must be to both ditch Botha and attempt to neutralise the Left in the ANC. They must draw into a political settlement those for whom the revolution might end with liberal democracy.

This, quite clearly, was the general direction of the exploratory exchange of views as mining house chief Relly termed his dicussion with the ANC leadership. He and his team did not sound particularly comforted by what they found, though they returned saying they had been impressed with the ANC leadership. Publisher of South Africa's superglossy *Leadership SA* magazine Hugh Murray said those they had met in the ANC — President Oliver Tambo; *Umkhonto we sizwe's* political commisar Chris Hani; director of information Thabo Mbeki; research department head Dr Pallo Jordan; political department official Mac Maharaj; and presidential secretary James Stewart — were 'very sophisticated guys'. The underlying tone of some of the other post-meeting comment from the business side, notably from Johannesburg *Sunday Times* editor Tertius Mybergh (who attended), approximated shock that the ANC leadership ate with knives and forks, were reasonable people and that as such could feel constrained to resort to violence in sunny South Africa.

THE ANC leadership, it is reliably understood, made clear that major monopolies would be nationalised on the ANC coming to power. Three such nationalisations — of Anglo American Corporation, Barlow Rand and the Afrikaans giant, Sanlam — would give an ANC government control over an estimated 75 per cent of the share capital on the Johannesburg stock exchange. The smaller trader and the business entrepreneur would be free to flourish in what would be a mixed economy, promised the ANC.

Words were also exchanged over some companies' treatment of black workers. Not so long ago, ANC guerillas caused some bomb damage to the offices of Anglo American and Anglo Vaal in central Johannesburg after the two companies had sacked several thousand miners. A senior ANC military official explained to me at the time the movement would 'punish those elements, be they state or business institutions — or even individuals — who continue to regard black workers and black people in general as fair game for any repressive action in defence of profit and privilege'.

A senior ANC source, who prefers to remain nameless, said after the meeting that it did not matter how often he or other ANC leaders had tea and scones with Gavin Relly: if Relly again abused black workers . . . bang.

But why did the ANC agree to hold an 'exchange of views' with a group it has long

Camera Press

ANC leader Oliver Tambo: more mature than 'childlike' P. W. Botha

described as an important element of 'the enemy forces'? The talks were, said my source, one tactic alongside mass political mobilisation of people inside the country and the armed struggle. The ploy is: do everything possible to exacerbate the tensions developing in the white bloc, and isolate Botha.

'There is a struggle going on for the allegiance of people at various levels and strata of our society. Basically, the struggle is between Botha and the ANC. Therefore it is necessary for the ANC to talk to people. Any meeting we have with non-ANC people is aimed at convincing them that the time is past for just fiddling around, changing this, reforming that. The reason people are dying is that they are saying: "We want a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. We want people's power".

'Through talks of the kind held in Zambia recently, it may be possible to move some elements away from active support for and perpetuation of the system. Relly and the others have drawn the attention of a portion of South African society to the fact that this government is unable to maintain stability in our country. These are people who had illusions that the Botha regime had the answers,' the ANC source added.

This reflects the ANC's push for the posture of alternative government. The talks with Relly have helped ANC attempts to build that image. In the event of negotiations between the ANC and the Botha government, however, a whole range of preconditions would arise. The central one is that any such talks are premised on an agreement by both sides that the end goal is a 'united, democratic and non-racial South Africa'.

'That position is not negotiable. Any negotiations,' said the ANC leadership source, 'must be about the transfer of power to the people. There can be no question of mere amendments and reforms to the present order.' □

SOVIET UNION

GORBACHEV STRUGGLES FOR POWER

Getting control of Soviet politics is not so easy, and splits at the top are coming out in public reports
STEPHEN COHEN

SIX MONTHS after Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party, most Western commentators have concluded that he is already the undisputed master of Soviet power and policy.

The real situation, as indicated by the Soviet press and by conversations with officials in Moscow, is different. Gorbachev is secure as Party leader, but his programme calling for 'deep transformations' in the economic system has encountered stubborn opposition — even, as he admits, at 'top echelons'. His own power to legislate such reforms, much less have them implemented, remains limited.

That the struggle continues should come as no surprise. Soviet political succession has always been a long drama, never a single act. Every new party leader has needed years of patronage, compromise and coercion to extend his authority over broader policy realms. Above all, the fundamental conflict between reformers and conservatives over the Stalinist economic system is now in its fourth decade. And though every General Secretary since Stalin has tried to carry out significant changes there, none has yet succeeded.

Nor do leadership changes since March suggest the already dominant Gorbachev portrayed in so many Western accounts. Except for Grigory Romanov, his only plausible but very weak rival for the General Secretaryship, no one has been removed from the Politburo. Its 13 voting members still include five aged but influential survivors from the conservative Brezhnev era — among them, Nikolai Tikhonov, the 80-year-old Prime Minister whose government bureaucracy is the centre of opposition to economic reform.

As for the other voting members, including four promoted under Gorbachev, there is no reason to assume they are merely his political creatures. Like Gorbachev, several are relatively young, reform-minded men who rose rapidly under Yuri Andropov in 1982-84. But once promoted, former loyalists often turn out to have different ambitions, as both Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev discovered.

Moreover, Andrei Gromyko's elevation from Foreign Minister to President can hardly be interpreted as a great victory for Gorbachev. The view that Gorbachev kicked him 'upstairs' in order to seize control of foreign policy assumes that Gromyko had monopolised the field and had opposed the new General Secretary. There is no evidence for either

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assumption. Major foreign policy decisions are made in the Politburo, where Gromyko remains a full member.

Most significant, Gorbachev himself did not get the ceremonial Presidency, which was sought and won by the three preceding Party leaders because it gave them head-of-state status in international affairs. His public explanation that he was too busy wth domestic problems was nonsense; he had been meeting regularly with visiting foreign leaders and had already arranged summits abroad with French President Mitterrand and President Reagan.

Privately, some Moscow officials report that Gorbachev wants instead the powerful office of Prime Minister. If so, he will have to wage a major battle to repeal a secret 1964 resolution, adopted by the Central Committee when it ousted Khrushchev, prohibiting future Party leaders from being head of the government ministries.

Whatever the real backstage politics, an upsurge of oblique polemics in the Soviet press is additional evidence of Gorbachev's still limited power. As always happens when the top leadership is divided, long-standing advocates and opponents of change in various policy areas perceive new opportunities or dangers and thus redouble their own efforts.

Since March, the press has been filled with conflicting positions on everything from the Stalinist past to present-day China. On 21, June for example, *Pravda* published a long commentary condemning market reforms and foreign policy initiatives by East European governments. In July, the equally authoritative *Kommunist* featured two articles defending those developments.

GORBACHEV'S ECONOMIC policies are at the centre of these conflicts. Hinting at more reforms to come, he has called for a restructuring of the entire planning and management system by 1987 that would sharply reduce the direct control exercised by Moscow planners and ministries over local firms, give enterprise managers considerably more freedom to operate by 'economic rather than administrative methods' and cut drastically the vast middle-level bureaucracy of ministerial agencies as 'superfluous links'. A nation-wide expansion of Andropov's limited 1983 'experiment', it threatens the positions of countless government officials and has aroused strong bureaucratic opposition.

In response, Gorbachev's supporters have stepped up their attacks on 'the ministerial apparatus'. In an *Izvestiia* interview on 1, June the well-known reformer Tatyana Zaslavskaya virtually accused such 'group interests' a fitting but unorthodox concept in the Soviet Union of sabotaging Gorbachev's policy.

In a remarkably candid speech on 11, June Gorbachev personally dropped the customary fiction of a united Soviet leadership. 'The ministries', he charged, 'have no interest in the economic experiment ... in the introduction of those principles'. The ministries have representatives and allies on the Party Politburo and Central Committee and are responsible for implementing those 'principles', so the obstacles to Gorbachev's reforms are plentiful.

None of this is new. Twenty years ago, the fledgling Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership introduced a similar reform with equal fanfare. It disappeared in the government bureaucracy with, as Gorbachev now worries, 'nothing ... left of its principles'.

Can Gorbachev, therefore, never be the reforming leader he clearly wishes to be?

Though many circumstances remain the same, much has also changed in the Soviet system and in the world where it must compete as a superpower. Given Gorbachev's youth, the lagging Soviet economy and a growing reformist mood in the elite, he may eventually succeed, but not without a long struggle that has only begun. □

Stephen Cohen is professor of politics at Princeton University.

MIDDLE EAST

SETTLERS FORCE GAG ON ARABS

— but liberal Israelis are protesting at the censorship of the Palestinian press, writes DEBORAH PUGH

Jerusalem

THE THREATENED closure of *Al-Darb*, Jerusalem's newest Arabic weekly, has become the focal point of the latest confrontation between the Israeli government and the embattled Palestinian press. Raphael Levy, Israel's District Commissioner for Jerusalem, called in the publisher of *Al-Darb* on 18 September, reportedly because of intense pressure from the extreme right-wing settler movement.

In recent months the settlers have targetted the nationalist press in Arab East Jerusalem for 'inciting violence' and have called on the government to close a dozen publications. Yet in accordance with Israel's strict censorship regulations nothing can be published in the Arab press unless passed by the censors. They frequently ban 50 per cent of the copy submitted to them.

At the heart of the settlers' discontent is the nationalist flavour of the Palestinian press, which overwhelmingly favours an independent Palestinian state. The settlers believe any cultural or political expression of Palestinian identity must be suppressed. Yet what *Al-Darb* is being accused of by Commissioner Levy is that it is 'administered and directed by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine' — a serious charge which is hotly denied by *Al-Darb*.

Certainly the two small rooms which represent *Al-Darb's* office space give little evidence of a well-funded front organisation. However, evidence is not necessary for closure. Once Raphael Levy gives the order *Al-Darb* will be shut down. The precedent has already been set. On 9 September, a Palestinian press service, *Al-Minar*, was closed for six months without warning, ostensibly to safeguard public safety under Clause 129 of the Emergency Defence Regulations, passed by the British during the Mandate period and still widely utilised by the Israelis.

The widespread use of these emergency regulations has led to concern in the Israeli press and liberal establishments, for in theory these laws are also applicable to the Hebrew press as East Jerusalem, since its annexation, is under Israeli law. The situation in the occupied territories is governed by military orders and is far more severe. Indeed, the four month old *Al-Darb* has been prevented from being distributed in the occupied territories, even though all the copy is first presented to the censors.

It may well be that Commissioner Levy has hesitated simply to shut down *Al-Darb* because of the unprecedented pressure being exerted on its behalf by Israelis. On 17 September 44 Israeli academics and public figures signed a protest letter, published in the prestigious Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz*. The following day another 40 added their names in a rare display of public interest in human rights in the occupied territories.

It is also clear that the interest in *Al-Darb's* case has been heightened by the disgust that many Israelis feel at the violent actions of the settlers in the occupied territories. In effect, the coalition government, already beset by serious divisions, is being pressured on one side by settler fanatics and on the other hand by liberal Israelis. The Palestinian press is caught in the crossfire. □

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LETTERS

We don't need Uncle Toms

Marcus Clayson, Lozells, Birmingham

I had hoped that the *New Statesman* (13 September) would take a more balanced and informed view of the events in Lozells and Handsworth on 9 and 10 September. It appears that this is not the case. You have opted for the approach typical of the media, which saw the 'riots' as further confirmation of their prejudices about the area.

Have you ever been to Lozells, Mr Stephenson? How do you *know* that 'Funds for community projects . . . have to some extent kept the lid on social frustration in the area . . .?' Is the area *really* one of 'extensive alcohol and drug abuse'? How do you know? Oh, you read about it in the papers.

I *am* glad, however, that 'In the last analysis most of this is irrelevant'. It can all be blamed on Thatcherism. And 'the cure'? A massive injection of Derek Bishton and his ilk, the professional white bourgeoisie who make careers out of 'organising and advising the community'. It is a pity that the only symbol of this Uncle Tom-ism to be razed was 'Community Transport'. No, Mr Stephenson and Mr Bishton, the problem is not Thatcherism, lack of funds for 'community' projects, the abolition of the West Midlands County Council (and what have these County Councils *done* for 'their' inner cities?) or even insensitive policing.

The problem is professionals who look at the area's residents as sociologists' guinea pigs, who see Handsworth and Lozells as a 'human scrap yard, divested of dignity, hope and the resources to make anything better', and a class society in which we are everywhere confronted by the hierarchies of power, and the obscenities of racism and sexism.

Grow your own

Irene Evans, Crieff, Perthshire

Stephen Joseph writes that one of the better uses to which Green Belts could be put is the provision of allotments. In the same issue (*NS* 13 September), in the footnote to her article on her experience of allotment gardening, Angela Harding points out that people who want an allotment should get in touch with their local council. So they should, but if they do what chance to they have of actually getting one?

I sent out questionnaires in January this year to the 56 District and Island Councils in Scotland which are responsible for allotments. Among the major cities, Glasgow has one for every 950 people, Edinburgh one for 420, Aberdeen one for 350 and Dundee one for 270. The 88,460 people in Strathkelvin have no chance of getting one, nor the 144,140 who live in Falkirk because there are none.

Where waiting lists are kept they almost always have names on them. Some districts told me that there is 'no demand' for allotments. But are people ever told that by law they have the right to ask for allotments and that the local authority has the obligation to provide them? It appears that only in wartime does land become magically available along with instruction and encouragement.

The right to an allotment should be jealously guarded because it is under attack. The 1969 Thorpe Report on allotments recommended that the right be allowed to wither away as part of a past in which allotments were a form of poor relief. As far as the Tories are concerned it's a well-known fact that you *never* give land to the people.

The Thorpe Report recommended that allotments be renamed 'leisure gardens'. In 1985 Lord Wallace of Ceslony introduced a bill for England and Wales 'to give allotment gardening the status of a "recreation".' To the best of my knowledge this attempt has not succeeded yet and I hope it never does. It would remove the ordinary landless man or woman's right to rent about an eighth of an acre of their own country for the purposes of growing some food. Allotment gardening is a productive and economically viable activity and is different in kind from other forms of recreation such as swimming a length, sinking a putt or scoring a goal. Allotments raise very basic issues about the land and the people.

Copies of the survey can be ordered from Janet Law, The Lodge, Blackford, Perthshire. Price £2.

Caries in pregnancy

Ann Clwyd MP, House of Commons

Joan Smith's otherwise excellent piece on the privatisation of dental care ('Cost of your caries', *NS* 16 August) is incorrect in one area: not all pregnant women can, as the *British Dental Journal* suggests, receive free treatment. In September 1984 I wrote to Kenneth Clarke to point out that his Department's leaflet outlining provisions for exemption from dental charges was misleading in one vital respect. It gave the impression that all expectant mothers were entitled to free treatment whereas in fact only those pregnant from the start of their treatment were so entitled. Further to this, in April 1985 I wrote to Norman Fowler to ask for a change in the rules to bring this anomalous situation, whereby some pregnant women are entitled to exemptions denied others, to an end. His refusal shows a callous disregard for the health of pregnant women, and the high price some expectant mothers pay for the privatisation of the dental service. I urge women to write to the Minister, and to lobby their MPs — to so embarrass the government that they are compelled to change their iniquitous policy towards women on this issue.

All in a name

Gideon Keren, Hanworth, Middlesex

I was somewhat amused by Mamzer Ben-Zona's letter (*NS* 20 September) in which he wrote of the links between Israel and South Africa. It was not his views (which I felt were neither here nor there) that were the cause of so much merriment, but the fact that he seems to have succeeded in playing a rather obnoxious trick at the *New Statesman*'s expense. Translated from Hebrew 'mamzer' equates to 'bastard', and 'Ben-Zona' literally means 'son of a whore'.

The case against Crick

Des McLernon, Labour Committee on Ireland

It is not just that I disagree with Bernard Crick's 'gradualist' approach to Northern Ireland (*NS* 20 September), or his arrogant dismissal of re-unification, but I question why his article was asked for in the first place.

Previous contributions like Clive Soley MP, and more recently Neil McCafferty, at least reflect two major currents in the Irish debate — irrespective of one's own political persuasions. Bernard Crick speaks, quite simply, for Bernard Crick.

The Labour Party, of which both myself and, I believe, Professor Crick are members, is re-formulating its policy on Ireland with re-unification as the central objective. Its last conference declared its opposition to plastic bullets, no-jury (Diplock) courts, the 'supergrass' system and the strip-searching of women prisoners. The Labour Committee on Ireland, which includes 21 MPs and MEPs, and the vast majority of constituency Labour parties argue for a policy of withdrawal for the next Labour government. This demand is now finding a growing resonance within the labour and trade union movement.

And while the most significant changes in the

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TEA + CAKES
blither standards blurble blumble rewards
mumble wumble criteria woffle snoffle excellence
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
I RECOGNISE THE FACE... BUT I CAN'T PLACE THE PLANET
MINNION

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LP's Irish policy for over 60 years are taking place, Professor Crick sulks on the political fringe, muttering his own pseudo-sociological jargon better suited to the *Daily Telegraph* than the *NS*, like 'crypto-terrorists who enjoy the pornographic voyeurism of somebody else's violence'.

But then according to the 'pale-pink' Professor there is no specifically socialist solution to the 'Northern Irish problem'. Perhaps he just chooses to forget it — self-determination — the policy of the 1920 LP conference for 'Ireland's British problem'.

Maeve Wilkins, London N10

In order for the Forum scenario depicted by Bernard Crick to operate the following conditions are implicit: suspension of committal to the democratic process, or alternatively a belief that Unionists after 60 years of intransigent total political control demonstrate any sign whatsoever of willingness to participate in the democratic process; that 200,000 Protestants under arms will hand in their weapons, voluntarily; that the Republican socialist movement will be eliminated from the political scene by a military attack on the Republican areas; that subsequently, the nationalist population will accede to a form of verbal unification, contenting themselves with Diplock Courts, strip searching of their women prisoners, lack of protection against assassination attempts et al by the right to fly the Irish flag.

Not so gentle oath

Nicolas Walter, London N1

In his review of A. N. Wilson's novel *Gentlemen in England* (*NS* 6 September), Colin Greenland follows one of the author's references to events in 1880 by mentioning 'Charles Bradlaugh's refusal to take his parliamentary oath'.

Bradlaugh *never* refused to take the religious oath. When he was elected in April 1880, he immediately tried to affirm, but on being rejected insisted on his right to take the oath despite his atheism. Indeed he tried to do so a dozen times from May 1880 onwards and did so several times, actually being prosecuted for doing so in 1884 and finally being permitted to do so in 1886.

Acronym sickness

K K (Kate Kyle), Edinburgh

The Duncan Campbell/Patrick Forbes Exclusive (DCPFE) (*NS* 13 September) on USUKLOC's JLP and COB agreement will no doubt shock CND, the BMA, the MoD and the DHSS, and might have shocked Your Average Reader (YAR) considerably more had she been able to cope with the 14 Separate Bloody Acronyms (SBA) (85 in total) she counted in 3 pp.

The jobless constituency

Bob Ardler, London N4

It seems careless of Heath, Jowell and Curtice (Peter Kellner, *NS* 20 September) to have lost 3,000,000 of the electorate. 'Non-working adults', it seems, 'are classified according to the occupation of the head of the household.' Into the table of percentages, in this 'standard text of the decade' sink the jobless, leaving not a bubble.

The Labour Party, modestly funded by unions representing *workers*, who once *were* the poor, from conscience only continues its efforts for the jobless. For Thatcher appears to have proved that they can be discounted: they give nothing to party funds, they don't vote, they cost money and when disaffected represent no danger since they turn their anger against themselves. By attacking inner city local government she has destroyed much Labour support amongst the poor. If Labour does gain power the cost of aiding the poor will fail on trade unionists as well as Tory and Alliance voters and the institutional opposition will be even more savage than last time.

On the face of it, therefore, H, J and C are right to discount (if they do) the jobless element. But I think that Thatcher has underestimated the force of the compassionate vote which from time to time can be marshalled. And if she hasn't, the time may come when the poor are organised by very nasty people, and turn their anger outwards.

Working-class library

Anthony Rae, Manchester City Council

The contents of Ruth and Eddie Frow's Working Class Movement Library (*NS* 30 August) will feature prominently in the exhibition 'Trade Unionism in Manchester 1740-1985', being mounted in Manchester Town Hall as part of Manchester Trade Union Week 7-13 October. The week will also feature many aspects of contemporary trade union activity.

Job descriptions

L. G. Coe, Emergency Planning Officer, North West Thames Regional Health Authority

In their piece on Wartime Emergency Plans (*NS* 13 September) Duncan Campbell and Patrick Forbes aver that NHS Civil Defence Planners 'whom the government insisted be appointed four years ago' were tasked 'to convince doctors and the public alike — despite the findings of a major BMA report on the Effects of Nuclear War — that a medical response to a future war is worthwhile.'

As the Emergency Planning Officer responsible for NHS Civil Defence planning in the capital, I can assure your readers that my job description says nothing about my convincing anybody about anything, nor did the enabling DHSS circular.

There is also the point that the BMA report (which, so far as nuclear war is concerned, told us what we already knew — it ignored 'conventional' war which we take very seriously) came out two years ago *after* the DHSS decision that Regional Health Authorities should appoint Emergency Planning Officers for Civil Defence purposes, not vice-versa, so that its findings could not have been material in 1981 when I was appointed.

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A MOLE IN THE CLASSROOM

SUE TOWNSEND, creator of the stunningly world-famous Adrian Mole, recounts her passionate love for the original Mr Mole and looks in horror at the inside of the shabby classrooms and, too often, child-hating staff rooms of today's underpaid teachers

WHEN I WAS five I had my legs slapped hard for standing on my head against a wall, and showing my knickers. The woman teacher that slapped me drank herself to death, in and out of school. She was feared and despised by the small children she taught. I was so terrified of her that during her lessons, (mostly sums) I was incapable of retaining any information. I was eight before I could read properly. I learnt at home when I was absent for three weeks with a spectacular attack of mumps. My mother bought a pile of 'William Brown' books from a rummage sale and gave them to me, and I can remember reading and re-reading them until the delightful words became clear, and I understood and laughed. I've never been without a book since.

At the age of ten I went into Mr Mole's class and for the first time I was happy at school. Mr Mole was an eccentric. He was a tiny man with smarmed down hair and a permanent smile. He was proud of his lovely singing voice and often sang English folk songs to us in the middle of taking the register, or counting the dinner money. Mr Mole made every child bring their dinner money payment inside an envelope. The few of us who paid for our free school dinners with tokens were very grateful. Our school was in a middle-class suburb, and the Jeremys and Janes could be very cruel to the working-class children who lived in the prefabs as I did.

The reason I loved Mr Mole so passionately was because every afternoon just before going-home time he would read aloud to us. Mr Mole mostly read from funny books, and he would take all the parts; Winnie the Pooh, Tom Sawyer, Mr Pickwick. By the end of the reading he would be on the floor with tears streaming down his small face. The class would be hysterical with joy, and I would often be too weak to walk home, and instead would have to sit at my desk like a convalescent until I'd recovered my strength. Mr Mole was invariably polite to us children, he always said 'please' and 'thank-you', and I don't remember him raising his voice in anger yet nobody misbehaved in his class.

I once told Mr Mole a lie. At 9 in the morning I told him that, on my way to school, I'd seen a bride, bridegroom and four bridesmaids sitting in posh cars, that were being driven so slowly that I'd been unable to cross the road, and so been late for school. Mr Mole said, 'You've got a vivid imagination Susan, it's a lovely thing to have but please try not to be late again'.

I failed my eleven plus because I didn't attempt to answer a single maths question. I went to a Secondary Modern, was influenced by my Miss Bridie, who read my essays aloud to the class and preached the virtues of always having clean fingernails. My exam results were always lousy apart from English but I rose through the ranks to become Form Captain, House Captain, Sports Captain and a Prefect. During my fourteenth year I read Dostoievski and decided that nothing mattered. I played truant, because I hadn't done my homework, and was caught by the truant officer in Woolworth's playing cards with two sailors. The headmistress (who also died of drink) publicly removed my yellow sash and badges of office and told me: 'You are nothing but a dirty little beatnik', and then added, 'and not a very good one at that'.

So, I left school in my Juliet Greco lookalike outfit, one week before I turned fifteen, and apart from humiliating parents' evenings and the odd visit to claim that one of my four children was a 'good boy/girl at home' I hadn't been inside a classroom until the Adrian Mole books were published and started to be read in school assemblies and later used in the classrooms.

AFTER THAT I had a flood of requests to visit schools and give 'talks'. This prospect horrified me because unless I've had a couple of drinks I'm inarticulate. So I wrote back and made various excuses. Then eventually I agreed to visit a few schools providing my sessions could be of the 'question and answer' type. As I went round the schools giving various answers to the same questions I picked up quick impressions: Teachers were unhappy, didn't much like their jobs or the children, or the headteacher. Married teachers with children were drawing Family Income Supplement. Teachers were nervous, shouting, losing control of themselves and their classes. They were frighteningly conformist, almost as though they were in a permanent state of being interviewed, (which I suppose most of them were) promotion was obsessively discussed.

My overwhelming impression of many of them was that they were deeply boring and conservative. Of course there were in every school a few eccentric brave teachers who managed the juggling act of liking the children, keeping order, and teaching brilliantly. But they were regarded by their boring colleagues as buffoons, and had little status in the school. I began to dread going into staffrooms and, after one nasty scene I decided that I wouldn't accept any new invitations.

I'd seen a gang of teachers surround a fat boy who'd lost 10 pence of his dinner money, and accuse him of being 'grossly obese anyway, so missing a meal won't harm you'. I watched and listened as, from the sanctuary of the staffroom door, they goaded and accused him of lying. Eventually he started to cry and they turned happily to each other and glanced at me, expecting me to join in the fun. It was a

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Christine Roche

horrible moment, and I'm ashamed to admit that I didn't go to the fat boy and give him a ten pence piece and send him off for dinner.

I suppose I could have asked one of the teachers to change a fiver, the only money I'd got on me; but instead, I stared coldly back at them and eventually a young woman sent the boy away after lecturing him in a screeching voice about his 'lack of future'. She then sat down, opened her 'Tupperware' box, and peering inside started to grumble about what 'Mummy' had provided for her packed lunch. I watched this young woman very closely as she ate. I took in her dull clothes, her lank hair, her conversation about 'mummy'.She was perhaps 24 and lived at home. Later on I asked what subject she taught. It was Religious Education. I expect she would call herself a Christian.

The Tupperware box put away, she poured coffee from a small thermos flask and took the *Daily Mail* from her bag and read it. Meanwhile the other teachers talked about the horrors of the morning's teaching. They seemed to despise the children. Eventually I was rescued and taken to a classroom where 20 or so adolescents were waiting. I looked for the fat boy but he wasn't there. The session went well, the adolescents dropped their initial reserve and we had a few laughs, but I left the school determined not to take up any more school invitations. Over the next few months I fulfilled my existing commitments. I met some good teachers (they usually taught English), and some posturing bullies who made no attempt to hide their unpleasant characteristics. The teachers' industrial action had started and there was much anxious talk in the staffroom about Sir Keith Joseph and his proposed changes in education.

LAURA'S SHORT LETTER inviting me to talk to her class was irresistible. Every kid in the class had signed it. Signatures are so individual that my resolve broke and Kate my sister wrote to say that both she and I would go to Kirkby before the long summer holiday. We'd worked out the train journey from Leicester to Liverpool was too complicated and that we'd journey by car.

We drove around Kirkby for 20 minutes looking at the houses and public buildings. Without exception each public building looked wrecked. The shops were dark inside because they were boarded up. I'm almost 40 so I don't remember the war, but I have seen newsreels of London after a bombing raid and here they were again. Those same knots of people standing at the Post Office, (it was Family Benefit Day).

Outside the wrecked buildings we continued to drive around, and both of us commented on how many people were laughing; young fat women, thin old men.

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Pasty-faced toddlers in pushchairs, even dogs casually crossing the road in front of us, laughing. Of course I knew that Liverpool was the city of comedians but I hadn't expected laughing dogs.

Then the council houses: stone clad, Georgian doors, Casement Windows, Spanish Arches, vividly painted brickwork with contrast pointing, Hanging Baskets swaying from new Porch extensions. Men everywhere, painting fences, erecting loggias, lying underneath cars. Women standing on ladders, painting bedroom windows or fixing mock shutters. Had anarchy broken out? Had the people said, 'stuff your municipal repairs, and your council house colours, we'll have our house how *we* want it'? Had money gone on doing up a council house? Or had so many people *bought* their houses?

I didn't find out. I asked but nobody knew. I'd like to think it had happened because the people knew they had a council sympathetic to them, and that they felt able to build a Spanish arch around their front door and fix the name plate *Hacienda* on the wall, in the knowledge that a miserable git from the council wouldn't come round and demand that the arch be demolished and the nameplate removed.

We drove to the school and Laura met us at the entrance. She was a beautiful dark haired girl, and was nervous, almost as nervous as I was. She introduced herself and a boy from her class and together with the teacher we went upstairs. The class were sitting in the library talking and laughing quietly. When we entered they stopped and stared, taking in every detail of my clothing hair and shoes. They were without exception immaculately dressed, they shone with cleanliness. They were wearing a mixture of school uniform and the cheaper designer label clothes. They were good looking, and had kind jokey faces.

Their teacher was a nice bloke. He said a few introductory words and then turned me over to the class. There were a few of the expected 'How long...? How did you get the idea...?' Then they began to talk about the characters in the Mole books, they knew them intimately and talked about them as if they were real people. They were very acute in their observations and very funny, and they made me laugh a lot. Later on when we'd all relaxed one girl said, 'I thought you'd be posh', and a boy laughed and said, 'Yeah we thought you'd have a big hat on'.

So I talked about working-class writers they'd never heard of (apart from Alan Bleasdale who deserves his unofficial canonisation in Kirkby). I tried to stress the importance of books and reading to working-class children. I then surprised myself by launching into a gentle feminist speech, mainly directed at the girls who had literally placed themselves in the back row and were noticeably asking fewer questions than the boys. After my prod more of the girls joined in but some were easily put off by the remorseless jokiness of the boys.

'This country needs a revolution in education. . .Grossly incompetent head teachers should go. . . Above all we need to pay our teachers on a par with other professional groups'

WHILE I'D BEEN TALKING one boy with a thin face and wiry body had been creeping nearer to me. Eventually he was crouched at my side examining my face (probably counting the wrinkles). I stopped talking and he began to cross-examine me.

Him. Have you made a million pounds?
Me. No.
Him. Half a million?
Me. (uncomfortably) Well...I don't know.
Him. What do you spend your money on?
Me. Buying books and fags in cartons of two hundred.
Him. How many fags do you smoke a day?
Me. Thirty I'm ashamed to say. More if I've got a deadline.
Him. If you're ashamed, why don't you stop?
Me. (Nervous laugh) Because I'm addicted. I started at fifteen. Don't *you* ever start.
Him. How much did you pay for that pen?
Me. Thirty quid.
Him. You were done!...It's leakin' all over yer'ands!
Him. Where did you get that tee shirt from?
Me. London.
Him. How much was it?
Me. Eight pounds 99 pence.
Him. Is that *all*? With all *your* money.
Him. Why did you slag off Kirkby in your book?
Me. I said Rick Lemon was used to survival techniques. He was born and brought up in Kirkby new town.
Him. Why did you write that?
Me. Isn't Kirkby a tough place?
Him. It's great. You can have a laugh in Kirkby.
Him. What do you think about Brussels? (The disaster at the football stadium when Liverpool fans and Italian fans fought, causing many deaths).
Me. I think it was horrific.
Him. What caused it?
Me. A thousand things.
Him. Do you blame the Liverpool fans?
Me. Not entirely.
Him. Good because it was the police's fault. I know a bloke... who was there.
Him. What do you think of Kirkby now you've seen it for yourself?
Me. I like the way people have done their houses up. I expected them to be falling down.
Him. Why?
Me. Because Kirkby's got a reputation for having lousy housing, and poor facilities.
Him. (Indignantly) Who says?
Me. Well it's quite well known.
Him. (Triumphantly) Ah but this is *West* Kirkby! You must have heard about the others!

WE BROKE FOR tea and three cakes that had been baked and iced by the girls. Each cake had an iced word dribbled on it. 'Welcome' — to — Sue Townsend' said the cakes collectively. While we were eating I asked what they would do after leaving school. 'Dole' was the bleak reply. You could stay on, I said. 'No point, there's kids with 'A' levels on the dole,' said my thin faced friend, losing his smile.

During our conversation they told me that most of their parents and older brothers and sisters were unemployed. I asked the kids how they were able to afford their few designer label clothes. 'Me mam gets mine out of the catalogue' said the thin faced kid. 'Trouble is' he added with immaculate timing, 'by the time she's ordered it and it's took three weeks to come it's gone out of fashion!' Everybody laughed.

Kate and I prepared to go. We gave the teacher six hardback copies of the Mole books. He seemed overly grateful. He then told us that the whole class had shared *one* book between them; it was his own copy brought from home. The children had taken it in turns to borrow it overnight, (the term's English work had been based on Mole). There were no more copies available because the school library's budget had been badly affected by the cuts in education.

We drove back to Leicester with a cake on the back seat of the car. I could have wept at the sheer bloody waste. Instead I grew angry. This country needs a revolution in education. It is no longer enough to tinker about with the curriculum, or teachers' pay or patching up school buildings. Grossly incompetent head teachers should go. Everyone knows who they are. New solid schools should be built and a totally new curriculum should be worked out. One that reflects the needs of girls and those children comparatively new to our country. Above all we need to pay our teachers on a par with other professional groups, if we don't we may as well keep our children at home: reading. □

Sue Townsend the author of The Secret Diary of Adiran Mole Aged 13¾ *and* The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole, *both published by Methuen.*

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Hulton Picture Library

Pilgrims at the shrine of D.H.L.

Glyn Hughes

Lawrence's Men and Women
SHEILA MACLEOD *Heinemann* £12.95
Flame into Being
ANTHONY BURGESS *Heinemann* £9.95
D. H. Lawrence: Life into Art
KEITH SAGAR *Viking* £14.95 & £6.95
D.H. Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study
ANAIS NIN *Black Spring Press* £14.95 & £4.95 (available only by post from 335 Kennington Road, London SE11, postage 75p)
The World of Lawrence
HENRY MILLER *John Calder* £14.95
D.H. Lawrence and Tradition
ed. JEFFREY MEYERS *Athlone Press* £18
D.H. Lawrence 1885-1930: A Celebration
D.H. Lawrence Society £2.95
D.H. Lawrence Album
GEORGE HARDY and NATHANIEL HARRIS *Moorland* £8.95

I AM TOLD by a collector of Lawrentiana that 10,000 works have been published about D.H. Lawrence. In his home town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, where I am living as Arts Council Writer in Residence at the house fictionalised as The Bottoms in *Sons and Lovers,* 20,000 visitors are expected in this year of the centenary of Lawrence's birth. The mere 23 years of writing life by a miner's self-educated son who died at the age of 45 have been sufficient to canonise him as one of the greatest writers of the century; but isn't the interest shown in him greater than one would expect to be generated even by this fact?

Visitors wander, often bemused, around an Eastwood still 90 per cent prejudiced against its famous son. A great many Japanese make their pilgrimages here. This apparently is because Lawrence expresses a mysticism or spirituality of nature in tune with a Japanese tradition; also, the Japanese now find themselves struggling against the mercenary and materialistic society which was the crucible of Lawrence's struggles. The Americans find a writer, whom many English critics say is among our most provincial, to them most in keeping with the adventurous, open American spirit. Lawrence was one of the first to open their eyes to the uniqueness of their own literature.

A remarkably high proportion of the 10,000 scribes think it highly relevant to interpret Lawrence in terms of their autobiographies. Of the eight books for review, four of the five major ones look at Lawrence in this way. As with no other author, when and how we read Lawrence seems to give our own lives a meaningful, perhaps a heroic dimension, which we cannot help conveying to others when we speak of him. Many find a healing quality in his work, and this is to my mind the one quality necessary to great art, common to it all, as it was in ancient Epidauros. Numbers of schoolteachers are still not discouraged from thinking of him as a 'life-enhancing' example to our children. Then there are the poems, written about or rather to him: the masturbatory verses by women longing for Lawrence's ghost to arise and fuck them.

Sheila MacLeod in **Lawrence's Men and Women** represents the Women's Movement's antipathetic view of Lawrence. I'd have more faith in her perceptions if she did not carelessly let drop such comments as, 'I have scarcely been able to find a woman in the 1980's who has a good word to say' (for Lawrence). She should read some of the poems sent into my office in Eastwood, attend a Lawrence summer school or meet the unpaid servants of Lawrence's shrines and their visitors. Sheila MacLeod's statement tells me most about the limitations of her own perspective, taken (I wouldn't mind betting) from a place about five miles north of the Thames. Speaking of Paul in *Sons and Lovers,* 'like most men', she writes, 'he has no male friends to whom he can turn.' As a general statement, what rubbish!

Sheila MacLeod is one of the autobiographical writers. Her anorexia, her Leavisite parents and Ursula Brangwen's experience in *The Rainbow* that puts Ms MacLeod off teaching for ever are all considered relevant. If many turn to Lawrence for healing and sanity, it is the unhealthy Lawrence, sometimes sick in mind as he was in body, whom she examines. The sickness was undoubtedly there, and to my mind obtrudes most appallingly in the paintings — an art form in which Lawrence was inept, so that in it he unconsciously reveals himself, as a patient does who is painting for therapeutic reasons in a hospital.

The bulk of the book, and the subject on which Ms MacLeod is most revealing and articulate, is about Lawrence's 'gender confusion', his passion to be masculine tearing against his instinctive retreat into his own femininity. (A theme pioneered by Martin Green and Norman Mailer.) 'The extraordinary thing. . .is not that he writes well about women, but that he writes so badly and ineptly about men.' Ms MacLeod detests virtually all his male characters and doesn't much admire his approach to the female ones either.

Anthony Burgess's **Flame into Being,** on the other hand, is shamelessly a tribute. 'Lawrence's world is the divine unconscious. . . it sits strangely with the chairs, newspapers and ashtrays of the modern realistic novel. . . His work adds up to a unity to be read rather as one reads the Bible.' (The book is not *consistently* panegyric.) Seamed into it is one of those autobiographies, an entertaining encounter with Lawrence.

There are also some interesting mandates. Without, so far as I can detect, a trace of tongue in cheek, 'A working class boy should always

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marry into the aristocracy and preferably a foreign one,' Burgess dictates. Someone in the Cabinet should put that idea to Arthur Scargill. No wonder Mrs Thatcher honoured Burgess as 'critic of the year'. . .he could solve unemployment at a stroke.

Burgess is very good on the history of Lawrence's reputation. His chapter on *Women In Love* is particularly fine. ('One of the ten great novels of the century,' according to Burgess, but it is not one of Sheila MacLeod's 'favourite novels'. . .'a disappointing sequel to the beautifully accomplished *The Rainbow*,' she calls it. I look forward to the two of them serving on the same Booker committee.) Burgess being always very readable, *Flame into Being* offers a first-class primer or a guide into a first reading of Lawrence.

Burgess's method is, chapter by chapter, to relate Lawrence's writing chronologically to whatever was happening in his life at the time. As Burgess reminds us, Lawrence's work (he is writing here specifically of the poetry) 'is not the result of the creative process, it is the creative process itself.' Hence the biographical approach is a particularly apt way of dealing with him. Lawrence transformed his life into art while it was happening, and the two are confusingly but illuminatingly inseparable.

LIFE INTO ART is the subtitle of Keith Sagar's book, and I find it a work that does magnificently, profoundly what Burgess's book, because of its nature as a centenary tribute, often skips over. I would not like to guess what Sagar's fellow academics might think of *Life into Art*, but as a novelist I find it one of those rare works of literary biography or criticism which offers real help in my own craft. . . not merely for what it tells me about Lawrence, but for its instruction in the art.

There is no other literary, nor any other art form, that can take such a length of time or be so life-absorbing as writing a novel. (Except cathedral building, which is a group activity.) The novelist begins with an idea, even a scheme, but while writing is also changing, and over the years this change can be considerable. He or she becomes a different person to the one who began the task. For example, D.H. Lawrence began *Sons and Lovers* with the help of his heroine, Jessie Chambers, in Eastwood, but completed a final draft some four years later under the entirely different influence of Frieda, having eloped, raised a scandal and seen the England of the novel's setting from the new perspective of Germany, Italy and the bosom of a maturely sexual woman. It is similar for other novels . . . especially for *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love;* in other words, the great ones. Current experiences are laid down like rock strata in the various drafts, until the novel is deemed complete (if such a provisional form as a novel can ever be called complete).

It is this perception above others that strengthens *Life into Art.* Refreshingly, Sagar leaves out as quite irrelevant his own encounters with Lawrence. There is no vanity or vicariousness. There is displayed a profound knowledge of Lawrence, pursued over a lifetime with an integrity that has kept him somewhat at a tangent to conventional academic circles.

Finally, I would like to mention briefly a handful of other Lawrence books. Anais Nin's **D.H. Lawrence** and Henry Miller's **The World of D.H. Lawrence** are reprints of works first carried out in the early Thirties, both being remarkable personal perceptions of Lawrence. Miller's book was suggested to him as a way of giving a supposed pornographer a respectable, that is an academic, reputation, but turned into far more than that. Anais Nin's book is the intuitive response of a girl that rises to levels of emotional knowledge. Jeffrey Meyer's **D.H. Lawrence and Tradition** is a short book of essays by famous Lawrence scholars connecting Lawrence with various of his predecessors. . .Paul Delany on Lawrence and Carlyle, H.M. Daleski on Lawrence and George Eliot, etc.

And to end with, a couple of contributions from Nottingham and Eastwood. The D.H. Lawrence Society has put out a Celebratory Issue of its magazine, with fascinating contributions from authors ranging from Melvyn Bragg to a local miner. George Hardy, a retired post office clerk from Eastwood, with Nathaniel Harris, has produced a remarkable collection of photographs of Lawrence's Eastwood associations, very many of these not previously published and collected by George Hardy from a lifetime's devotion. □

Charles Dickinson
CROWS
'Charming and touching, an impressive advance from his first novel, WALTZ IN MARATHON ... something so special and original that comparisons are useless.'
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STONES OF THE WALL
Dai Houying
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FICTION

Grace notes

Gillian Wilce

The Good Apprentice
IRIS MURDOCH *Chatto* £9.95

Q. WHAT IS the difference between Mae West and Iris Murdoch?
A. Goodness, as far as Iris Murdoch is concerned, particularly in this latest novel, has *everything* to do with it.

Iris Murdoch would also, I suspect, find herself in disagreement with Martin Amis when he says that he would 'certainly sacrifice any psychological or realistic truth for a phrase'. In her books urgency of thought and of story carry you swiftly, scarcely heedingly past the occasional orotundity or looseness of phrase. And the story here is, as usual, intricate and fast-moving in spite of the amount of thinking done by most of the participants. It is, in a way, a moral soap opera: an enclosed, related group of people with the spotlight on them, an outer world that mirrors their private concerns, frequent changes of scene and actors, all conducive to reading on in order to find out what happens next. But the questions whose answers you find yourself pursuing all share in the thought as well as in the story, are all linked to ideas about goodness (and badness), meaning (or randomness):

Can Stuart really become, by an act of will, a kind of secular ascetic? Will his sort-of-brother Edward ever find relief from the hell of remorse for having mischievously but accidentally

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caused a friend's death? Will Mark's mother stop hating Edward? Will Edward's aunt Midge leave her analyst husband Thomas for her lover Harry, Stuart's father? Does Thomas know what he is doing with Edward's psyche? Did someone contrive the sign at the seance? Are Edward's re-discovered half-sisters and their Mother May well or ill intentioned towards Edward? towards Edward's artist father Jesse? Is Jesse mad? Is Thomas's patient Mr Blinnet mad or bad?

Surely the author can't be going to have Midge and Harry's car break down near that actual remote Norfolk fortress/retreat where so many of the cast are already assembled? Oh, but she can. And, no, in the event, it isn't too much — and that is not for any modernist, games-playing reasons, but because the novel is partly about how people use the apparent portents in their lives. That freight of almost mystic import felt in most Murdoch novels is here reflected on, even revised by the characters involved. As Edward muses on the past, he finds himself

> ...thinking about it in two quite different ways... In a way it's all a muddle starting off with an accident...In another way it's a whole complex thing, internally connected like a dark globe, a dark world, as if we were all parts of a single drama, living inside a work of art.

And sometimes, within this drama, it is in the withdrawing of a self-centred, projected 'significance', the plain seeing of someone else's ordinary problems that a kind of redemption lies.

The Good Apprentice, especially coming after the gloomy power relations of *The Philosopher's Pupil*, is singularly optimistic about a human inclination to go on struggling not just for meaning but for, well, goodness. □

News from nowhere

Michael Leapman

Last Letters from Hav
JAN MORRIS *Viking* £8.95

UNLIKE THE NOVELIST, the travel writer has no narrative to lean on, no exploration of motive, no central character except herself. Unlike the reporter, she describes locations rather than current events. Her work is interesting and valuable in so far as it conveys the essence of a real place.

We know Jan Morris can do that better than anyone. In her last volume of travel essays she declared that she had visited and written about every major city in the world and her odyssey was at an end. Now, following logically from that, she sets herself a fresh challenge by using her well-honed techniques to describe a place that exists only in her imagination. The book is not a novel because it has no plot. So how can she sustain our interest in a fictional location without employing the devices of fiction? It is like designing a stage set but omitting to write the play.

She gets away with it partly by strewing the narrative with some good jokes, many of them against herself and the school of writing she practises. Hav is a small Mediterranean peninsula, separated from the rest of the continent (what continent?) by a steep escarpment penetrated by a spiralling rail tunnel that would be an engineering miracle if it existed. Into this imaginary country Jan Morris has stuffed attributes of dozens of places she has been to and written about: its people represent most of the world's ethnic groups; almost any language will get you by; its architecture is evidence of colonisation by the European powers in turn or collectively; it has been a refuge for exiles from totalitarian regimes, and then for the pillars of those regimes when they in turn have been driven away.

Hardly anyone you have heard of has failed to spend time there: Hemingway delivered a delicious insult to a Fascist aristocrat shooting bears in the hills; Tolstoy travelled hazardously down the escarpment in a pony trap; Diaghilev and Nijinsky danced in a marquee in the square; T.E. Lawrence took Ataturk for a ride on his motorbike in the drive of what was to become the British residence; even Hitler may have passed through during the war.

It has its zany annual event — not running bulls or thundering elephants but the roof race, where the strapping youths of the town leap over alleyways and clamber up and down walls in an exhausting ritual said to commemorate the exploits of a messenger delivering a vital document to the leader of an uprising against the Ottoman Turks. It has its precious local delicacy, the snow raspberry, that can be gathered only on three or four days every year — so expensive that it is kept mainly for state occasions and residents boast if they have tasted even one. It has its distinctive wild life, its primitive cave-dwelling tribe, its mystical robed sect, its private casino for the exceedingly rich. It is the source of an aphrodisiac salt.

These are the details travel writers relish. As she recites them, Ms Morris seeks to keep our attention with an overlay of growing menace, starting when a man spits at her in the street and culminating in a mass exodus as rumours of unrest grow, fighter planes fly low over the capital and warships are spotted on the horizon. Perhaps, then, this is not a literary frolic after all. The blurb hints at an allegory. Do we equate the warships with the Zeppelins in *Heartbreak House*, symbolising the end of civilised life as we have known it?

I think not, because she does not tell us what is going on, whose warships they are and why. Even in fiction, she is unwilling to step outside the conventions of travel writing into the business of a reporter. A few well-directed questions to her impeccable sources, following up the many hints she has been offered, would have provided the material for a *Guardian* op-ed feature — but travel writers do not behave in that way. Like cricketers touring South Africa, they insist on staying non-political. They do what they know how to do, describing what is there and the history that has created it; they observe but they do not want to get involved.

It is a good joke and she sustains it well. But where does she go from Hav? □

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Selected Autumn and Winter Books

The books listed below are a selection from those which publishers hope to issue between now and the end of March. Some prices are provisional. Titles already announced are not included.

Fiction

RICHARD APPIGNANESI **Italia Perversa Part Two: The Mosque** *Quartet* £8.95
HEINRICH BOLL **A Soldier's Legacy** *Secker* £8.95
ANDRE BRINK **The Ambassador** *Faber* £9.95
ANGELA CARTER **Black Venus** *Chatto* £8.95
ROBERT COOVER **Gerald's Party** *Heinemann* £9.95
PETER DE VRIES **The Prick of Noon** *Gollancz* £8.95
E.L. DOCTOROW **World's Fair** *Michael Joseph* £9.95
MARGUERITE DURAS **The Lover** *Collins* £7.95
NAWAL EL SAADAWI **God Dies By the Nile** *Zed* £8.95 & £3.95
JOHN FULLER **The Adventures of Speedfall** *Salamander* £9.95
MAGGIE GEE **Light Years** *Faber* £9.95
PENELOPE GILLIATT **They Sleep Without Dreaming** *Macmillan* £12.95
MARY GORDON **Men and Angels** *Cape* £8.95
PATRICIA HIGHSMITH **Found in the Street** *Heinemann* £8.95
KAZUO ISHIGURO **An Artist of the Floating World** *Faber* £9.95
GABRIEL JOSIPOVICI **Contre-Jour** *Carcanet* £8.95
THOMAS KENEALLY **A Family Madness** *Hodder* £9.95
JESSIE KESSON **Where The Apple Ripens** *Chatto* £8.95
PRIMO LEVI **If Not Now, When?** *Michael Joseph* £9.95
ALBERTO MORAVIA **Erotic Tales** *Secker* £8.95
R. K. NARAYAN **Under the Banyan Tree** *Heinemann* £8.95
JOYCE CAROL OATES **Last Days** *Cape* £9.50
GRACE PALEY **Later the Same Day** *Virago* about £7.95 & £3.50
DAVID PLANTE **The Catholic** *Chatto* £8.95
JULIAN RATHBONE **Lying in State** *Heinemann* £8.95
SIMON RAVEN **Doctors Wear Scarlet** *John Goodchild* £8.95
PHILIP ROTH **The Prague Orgy** *Cape* £6.95
NAYANTARA SAHGAL **Plans for Departure** *Heinemann* £9.50
LEONARDO SCIASCIA **The Wine-Dark Sea** *Carcanet* £8.95
ALAN SILLITOE **Life Goes On** *Granada* £8.95
IGNAZIO SILONE **Bread and Wine** *Dent* about £9.95
WILLIAM TREVOR **The News From Ireland and Other Stories** *Bodley Head* £8.95
ANNE TYLER **The Accidental Tourist** *Chatto* £9.95
PETER VANSITTART **Aspects of Feeling** *Peter Owen* £9.95
KURT VONNEGUT **Galapagos** *Cape* £8.95
TOM WAKEFIELD **The Discus Throwers** *GMP* £9.95 & £3.95
MICHELENE WANDOR **Guests in the Body** *Virago* about £9.95 & £3.95
JEANNETTE WINTERSON **Boating for Beginners** *Methuen* about £8.95 & £3.50

Poetry

AMY CLAMPITT **What the Light Was Like** *Faber* £4
WENDY COPE **Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis** *Faber*
PAUL DURCAN **The Berlin Wall Café** *Blackstaff* £4.95
ROY FULLER **Subsequent to Summer** *Salamander* £5.95
PAUL MULDOON (Ed.) **The Faber Book of Contemporary Poetry** *Faber*
FRANK ORMSBY **A Northern Spring** *Secker* £3.95
TOM PICKARD **Custom and Exile** *Allison & Busby* £4
JEREMY REED **Nero** *Cape* £4
CHRISTOPHER REID **Katerina Brac** *Faber* £8.95 & £3.95
MICHELE ROBERTS **Mirror of the Mother** *Methuen* about £2.95
MATTHEW SWEENEY **The Lame Waltzer** *Allison & Busby* £4
GEORGE SZIRTES **The Photographer in Winter** *Secker* £3.95
JOHN UPDIKE **Facing Nature** *Deutsch* about £4.95

Literature

PETER J. CONRADI **Iris Murdoch: The Saint and the Artist** *Macmillan* £25
J. HENDRY & B. ROSS (Eds) **Sorley Maclean** *Scottish Academic Press* £15
ROBERT McCRUM **The Story of English** *Faber*
JACQUELINE McDONNELL **Waugh on Women** *Duckworth* £12.95
P. W. MUSGRAVE **From Brown to Bunter: The Life and Death of the School Story** *Routledge* £12.95
V. S. PRITCHETT **A Man of Letters** *Chatto* £12.95
CHARLES RUAS **Conversations with American Writers** *Quartet* £9.95
ERIC SAMS (Ed.) **Shakespeare's Lost Play: Edmund Ironside** *Fourth Estate* £25
GABRIELA YANES, MANUEL SORTO, HORACIO CASTELLANOS MOYA & LYN SORTO (Eds) **Mirrors of War: Literature and Revolution in El Salvador** *Zed* £14.95 & £5.95
MARGUERITE YOURCENAR **Mishima** *Aidan Ellis* £9.50

Art, architecture

RUDOLPH BARANIK & GLENN THOMPSON (Eds) **On Art** *Writers & Readers* £15.95 & £7.95
ROGER BILLCLIFFE **The Glasgow Boys: The Glasgow School of Painting 1875-1895** *John Murray* £35
WHITNEY CHADWICK **Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement** *Thames & Hudson* £16.50
MATTHIAS EBERLE **World War I and the Weimar Artists: Dix, Grosz, Beckmann, Schlemmer** *Yale* £14.95
CARLO GINZBURG **The Enigma of Piero: Piero della Francesca: The Baptism; The Arezzo Cycle; The Flagellation** *Verso* £12.95
JOSEPH RYKWERT **The Brothers Adam: The Men and the Style** *Collins* £15
JOHN SUMMERSON **Architecture of the Eighteenth Century** *Thames & Hudson* £3.95

Music

ANDREI BELY **The Dramatic Symphony and the Forms of Art** *Polygon* £10.95
BARNEY BIGARD **With Louis and the Duke: The Autobiography of a Jazz Clarinettist** *Macmillan* £15
ANDRES BRINER **Paul Hindemith** *John Calder* £14.95
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PAUL GRIFFITHS **New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s in conversation with Paul Griffiths** *Faber* £5.95
EWAN MacCOLL & PEGGY SEEGER **Till Doomsday in the Afternoon** *Manchester* £27.50
SALLY PLACKSIN **Jazzwomen: 1900 to the Present** *Pluto* £5.95
MIKE ZWERIN **La Tristesse de Saint Louis: Swing Under the Nazis** *Quartet* £13.95

Films, TV and radio

PHILLIP DRUMMOND & RICHARD PATERSON **Television in Transition** *BFI*
ALASTAIR HETHERINGTON **News, Newspapers and Television** *Macmillan* £22.50 & £7.95
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PAULINE KAEL **Taking It All In** *Marion Boyars* £15
DAVID SHIPMAN **Caught in the Act: Sex and Eroticism in the Movies** *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95
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Biography

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PATRICK COSGRAVE **Carrington: A Life and a Policy** *Dent* £10.95
YAEL DAYAN **My Father, His Daughter** *Weidenfeld* £10.95
MONICA FURLONG **Genuine Fake: A Biography of Alan Watts** *Heinemann* £9.95
IAN HAMILTON **J. D. Salinger: A Writing Life** *Heinemann* £9.95
JAMES HARDING **James Agate** *Methuen* £12.95
WOLF RUDIGER HESS **My Father Rudolf Hess** *W. H. Allen* £12.95
HANS JANITSCHEK **Mario Soares: Portrait of a Hero** *Weidenfeld* £10.95
ROY JENKINS **Truman** *Collins* about £15
SIMON KARLINSKY **Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry** *Cambridge* about £25 & £8.50
ANDRO LINKLATER **Compton Mackenzie: A Life** *Chatto* £13.95
SARA MAITLAND **Vesta Tilley** *Virago* about £2.95
WILLIAM McBRIEN & JACK BARBERA **Stevie: A Biography of Stevie Smith** *Heinemann* £12.95
HELEN McNEIL **Emily Dickinson** *Virago* about £2.95
DAVID NOKES **Jonathan Swift: A Hypocrite Reversed** *Oxford* £12.95
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EDWARD THORPE **Kenneth MacMillan** *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95
PHILIP WALKER **Zola** *Routledge* £19.95
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Autobiography, diaries & letters

ANSEL ADAMS with MARY STREET ALINDER **An Autobiography** *Thames & Hudson* £35
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Clear-sighted

Geoff Dyer

Mr Palomar
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ALEXANDER KALETSKI *Heinemann* £9.95

IF, AS CALVINO tells us, human hands did not become skilful until they no longer had to cling to boughs or press on the ground, then Calvino, whose death last week we mourn, represents a highpoint of literary evolution; his skill is immense but retains a simian agility. He had long abandoned the thicker branches of narrative and the new fiction sees him balancing lightly on speculative and perceptual twigs.

Through the aptly-named Palomar, myriad experiences, observations and riddles of perception are telescoped into a series of carefully structured vignettes. Each short section vibrates with tantalising possibilities that develop with musical accuracy as the book's formal and substantial transformation — indicated by Calvino in a schematic index — from observation to meditation unfolds. As ever, Calvino's gaze is crystal-clear; his writing has the easy beauty of clarity ('white gulls, *rowing* the air with their long wings').

Although Calvino is renowned for playful ingenuity there is nothing whimsical about **Mr Palomar**. Indeed, there is an almost perfect sense of complementary relationships: Calvino is delicate and strong, his precision is lyric and mathematic; the equation between perceiver and perceived is made infinitely and effortlessly complex but remains exact.

The care which Calvino has lavished on the formal arrangement of his book should not, however, lead us to think that it offers only a formal resolution of compositional intricacies, for *Mr Palomar* is a work of cunning dialectics that goes beyond the delight in paradoxes for which Calvino is lazily praised.

Peter Ackroyd is also a writer of some agility, following his biography of T. S. Eliot with a kind of 'Murder in the Cathedral' — or in church to be exact. In the early 18th century Nicholas Dyer, architect, is organising the building of several new churches in the city of London. A pupil of Wren's, Dyer stands on the edge of the Enlightenment but is drawn back to times before the Plague and the Great Fire (which he survived as a child) by Cabbalistic rites and a line of occult mysteries that reach backwards into the Darkness of the Middle Ages. More than two and a half centuries later a series of murders at Dyer's churches is being investigated by detective Nicholas Hawksmoor whose every move begins eerily to parallel Dyer's (not surprisingly since Dyer's biography recalls that of the *real* architect, Nicholas Hawksmoor).

As a flashy piece of Baroque modernism **Hawksmoor** could hardly be bettered. As in Roeg's *Don't Look Now* the skill is in the editing: omens and allusions from across the centuries weave a web of portents until the mere raising of an arm or a single word in a sentence becomes disturbingly ominous.

Even without its additional merits as a chiller, the pages of Dyer's first-person narrative would be enough to make *Hawksmoor* an excellent novel. From the rhythms of the Restoration Ackroyd has created a rich and powerful vernacular that is drenched in the Corrupcions and Contagions from the plague years and earlier. The architect's London is similarly conceived — stews and taverns that are thick with heady fumes, quiet churches with long shadows and strange echoes, damp alleys filled with rats and human refuse.

As you emerge from *Hawksmoor* to **Self-Help** your eyes take a while to get used to the light, for Lorrie Moore's stories are dazzling exercises in an ingenious wisdom. Written, for the most part, as omniscient but partial instructions for modern women these stories have a deadly accurate clairvoyance; every couple of pages you're jolted by Moore's intimate knowledge of the not-so-spontaneous choreography of romance.

Clichés, says the narrator in one of the stories, can take on epiphanic dimensions with some people. That's how Moore works. Her stories delight in their own glossiness but are all the time controlled by her sense of the dangerous edge of things. Here she is on ending an affair:

> Do not attempt to bandy words. Tell him you do not love him anymore. It will make him cry. . .He will say something like: Well you lose some, you lose some. You are supposed to laugh. Exhale. Blow your nose. Flick off the light. Have a sense of humour, he will whisper into the black. Have a heart.

Reading Moore you simultaneously recognise and realise for the first time (that, for example, the problem with cold men is that 'they never learn the beauty or value of gesture'). These stories hurt: not because they clout you in the nose — it's more like bumping your face in a mirror. They're funny as well.

And so, in places, is Alexander Kaletski's novel of hip dissidence, **Metro**. The vodka-swilling antics of a pleasant bunch of good-natured bohemians are engaging enough but the prose is a little flabby, not quite sharp enough to hold your attention through the Solzhenitsyn-like bulk of the novel. □

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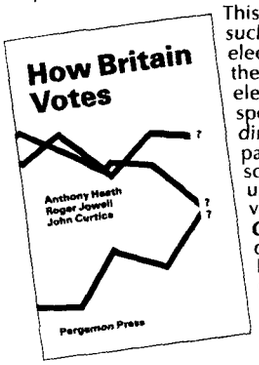

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FICTION

Worlds apart

Richard Deveson

Loyalties
RAYMOND WILLIAMS *Chatto* £9.95
Paradise Postponed
JOHN MORTIMER *Viking* £9.95
Hiroshima Joe
MARTIN BOOTH *Hutchinson* £9.95

LOYALTIES IS A magnificently engrossing novel. The fact that this reviewer disagrees with what seem to be its cardinal assumptions doesn't make it any less engrossing: everyone interested in Raymond Williams's work, both discursive and fictional, will be held by it.

As much argument as story, it is far too intricate to be properly summarised here, but its central figure is Nesta Pritchard, the daughter of a South Wales miner, with whom a young Communist and Cambridge mathematician, Norman Braose, falls in love in the late 1930s. Nesta bears his child, but Norman deserts her and she later marries Bert Lewis, himself a miner as well as a Communist, and Gwyn, the child, the symbolic as well as physical result of the coming-together of the

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upper-class left intelligentsia with the militant organised working class, grows up with a divided identity, deeply angry with his natural father both personally and politically yet unable to feel truly part of the world of the 'father' who has brought him up.

Threaded through this story, and the nearly 50 years of public political events which shape it and which (symbolically) it helps to shape, is a plot evolving out of secret computer research at a place rather coyly not named as Bletchley Park, a plot in which loyalties are divided in an apparently different way — except that, for Gwyn, the Communist intelligentsia's betrayals through espionage arise directly from its political betrayal and exploitation of the working class. Once a member of the ruling class, always a member.

Raymond Williams's conclusions, in all his writings, are nothing if not elusive. Here, the case for the 'traitors' is also put. Is the book itself suggesting that subversion of the state may sometimes be justified? We aren't helped to decide. During the 1984 coal strike, Gwyn (pushed by his mother) finds his way to some sort of 'duty' of solidarity: 'It isn't just an inheritance... It's a position now. It's a contemporary direction. It's a way of learning our future.' As a final statement, it's also very cloudy. More disturbing, yet also characteristic, is the sense that beneath the elusiveness and the very admirable intricacy lies something quite impossibly simple. There is no Labour Party in this novel; no non-industrial, non-militant working class; no conservative middle class, arguably a greater defence against fascism than organised labour; no middle classes of any kind, for that matter; nor, to all intents and purposes, are there any Moscow trials or Nazi-Soviet Pact or Hungarian uprising or Prague Spring. There is a ruling class, and there is an 'actual society' (talismanic phrase) on which any 'real socialism' depends. This society, though, isn't any old somewhere that all of us come from but, *par excellence*, a 'community' like a Welsh mining valley whose truest representatives happen to be, in this novel, the Communist-led militant working class.

It is genuinely baffling: is this just the world as these Thirties-schooled characters see it? Or is this also how the author sees it? Superbly described though it is, such a world is almost unrecognisable.

John Mortimer's **Paradise Postponed** starts like a rustic Fifties-film romp. There is a Miles Malleson part, a John le Mesurier part; there are funny gentry, funny lower orders (even a poacher), a funny rich progressive Rector of Rapstone Fanner who keeps getting written up in the *New Statesman*. None of this will separate the book from its destiny, which is to lie wrapped beneath a small forest's worth of Christmas trees.

But as the story grows, it turns into something more interesting: another version of the history of post-war Britain. Although Mortimer leaves out precisely the bits of society Williams puts in, he puts in (with enormous panache) many of the bits that Williams leaves out. Leslie Titmuss is a sort of Uriah Heep, an odious youth with a sniff who becomes a property speculator (a perfect Peter Sellers part) and, as the Tory Party is taken over by the accountants, floats irresistibly up into Thatcher's Cabinet. Fred Simcox, the Rector's younger son, is a country doctor who nearly gets married but doesn't, and accepts a lonely though worthwhile life helping old people prepare themselves for their deaths. Agnes, who goes off with Fred's brother instead, is an expert in self-directed *Schadenfreude* but may perhaps be willing to give Fred another chance.

The book's political moral is that ego and the accidents of birth largely determine the course of human affairs, that even progressives have their price and that the best that society can hope for is, figuratively speaking, devoted but unambitious medical attention. The sudden final twist in the somewhat contrived plot (about a will) doesn't, I think, contradict this moral. Such a society, it must be said, has become rather *too* recognisable.

Martin Booth's novel is a remarkable piece of writing. The **Hiroshima Joe** of the title is a British officer who is captured at the fall of Hong Kong in 1941, subjected to unspeakable treatment in Japanese camps and finally and fatally destroyed (though he lives a few years longer) by the Hiroshima bomb. As impressive as the scenes of war and imprisonment are some intensely visual descriptions of post-war Hong Kong, its mangy dogs and lines of washing, its ferries, mists and hills. Space only to say: outstanding. □

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A fistful of ideals

Terry Tastard

Fire from the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista
OMAR CABEZAS *Cape* £9.95 & £5.95

IN AN INTENSE outpouring of memories Omar Cabezas recalls his gritty transition from student organiser to Sandinista mountain guerrilla. It is a study in contrasts. On the one hand the book is earthy: swear words abound and there are honest descriptions of sexual frustration. Even toilet problems get a mention (his city slicker difficulties in learning to wipe his bum with grass).

On the other hand a curious innocence pervades the book, and this, I think, may make it hard for the Western reader to associate with the narration. It is the innocence of a person with a cause to believe in that s/he *knows* is right and will ultimately triumph. For example, the book culminates in a meeting between Cabezas and an old man who had fought with Sandino against the US marines in the 1920s. The man is now too old to fight and bequeaths his sons to carry on the struggle. For Cabezas this was clearly a moving experience, one of authentication through entering into a living tradition, but to us it comes across flat.

Nor is it easy to identify with a person who can say quite unaffectedly, as Cabezas does:

> I wanted to die in order to live, to struggle in order to live for Latin America, to live and die for the Indians, to live and die for the blacks, to live and die for the animals, to live and die for my dad, who was a son of a bitch but a very nice guy. . . I went into the mountains with a fistful of ideals tight in my hand.

Even harder to enter into is talk of the new, selfless person being born through the guerrilla experience and learning new values.

This talk of transmission of tradition, of vicarious suffering and being born again is of course religious language (and, ironically enough, the code name for the Sandinista Front was 'the Church'). Now Cabezas is scarcely a religious person in any conventional sense; if he says that early successes in student organisation were 'thanks to God and the Virgin' it is presumably a typical Nicaraguan way of underlining the difficulty of the enterprise. Still, reading this book, I was left wondering whether our Western loss of religious language (or abandonment of it to the 'moral majority') has not, *pace* Marx, made revolution more difficult.

Not that the book operates on such a theoretical plane. It is mostly concerned with the grim reality of guerrilla daily existence. We hear about killing and cooking monkeys for food; about sores from mountain leprosy so deep that they expose the bone; about eating wormy, rotten meat ('the farts afterward stank like hell'). Much of it is written in a swashbuckling, macho style: the first time they ate monkey 'it really looked like a little boy, but we didn't mention it because we didn't want to seem like squeamish women'. The loneliness was terrible but 'we were strictly male, and we couldn't say affectionate things'. The toughening Cabezas says, 'I was beginning to feel as if I had some balls'. Joining the Sandinistas was 'more or less a question of manhood'. But nevertheless Cabezas is ever ready to deflate himself.

In the end even his innocence is tempered by experience. The student who at the beginning eagerly organises Indian slum dwellers into groups to discuss the *Communist Manifesto* by the end is taking hold of the campesinos' roughened hands:

> 'Those callouses,' we asked. 'how did you get them?' And they would tell us how they came from machetes, from working the land. If they got those callouses from working the land, we asked, why did that land belong to the boss and not to them? We were trying to awake the campesino to his own dream. We wanted him to see that though the dream was dangerous — since it implied struggle — the land was their right.

Thanks to Cabezas and others — not least the 45,000 dead — that dream has come true for many since 1979. Cabezas himself was the only one of three sons to survive. We can guess that something won at such sacrificial cost is never going to be given up easily. □

Hard and soft

John Spurling

Kitchener: The Man Behind the Legend
PHILIP WARNER *Hamish Hamilton* £12.95
The Kitchener Enigma
TREVOR ROYLE *Michael Joseph* £15

THE TITLES of both these biographies suggest that they are dealing with some kind of mystery, but neither adds anything revelatory to the excellent *Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist* by Philip Magnus, published in 1958. However, our view of the British Empire and its heroes has undergone several violent shifts in the last 30 years, so that it was no doubt time for a fresh perspective.

Kitchener may have been an enigma to his contemporaries, but to us, as Philip Warner remarks in his final paragraph, 'perhaps his enormous popularity with the general public was the most extraordinary fact about him'. Even half-way through the First World War, when he was Secretary of State for War and everything seemed to be going wrong, the public's trust in him was so settled that his restless colleagues in the Cabinet dared not openly replace him. When the cruiser taking him to Russia in 1916 hit a mine and sank with him standing imperturbably on deck, Lloyd George and Lord Northcliffe both considered that they could now get on with the job of winning the war, but the public felt that it had lost its only solid footing.

Trevor Royle divides his account of Kitchener's part in the First War into four chapters, dealing separately with the three elements of his task — recruitment, ammunition and strategy — and, from about

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autumn 1915 on, the erosion of his power. What emerges from this clear and careful sorting out of strands is that Kitchener was indeed an asset, perhaps our greatest asset, in the early years of the war and that, although the popularity which brought him such power at that juncture seems unjustified by anything he had done in the past, it was finally deserved.

His reputation was made, of course, in Egypt and the Sudan, first by training the Egyptian army to stand up to the formidable army created by the Mahdi and his successor the Khalifa and then by overcoming with his unrivalled administrative energy the obstacles of distance and terrain which protected the Mahdists from the enormously superior firepower of the British. Omdurman was a British walkover, but Kitchener's crude and careless tactics during the battle itself were covered up and cancelled by the still greater ineptitude of his opponent the Khalifa. Two years later, at Paardeberg in 1900 — the only full-scale battle he directed in the Boer War — his failings as a commander in the field were cruelly exposed — cruelly, that's to say, for those he commanded, since his own reputation with the public, whatever other professional soldiers might say, hardly faltered. There is still argument about whether the Boer surrender at Paardeberg, which turned the war in Britain's favour, was caused more by Kitchener's confused and costly all-day assault or by Roberts's subsequent week of siege, but there can be no doubt that even if the assault was a good idea, its preparation and direction were lamentable.

Once the war had become a guerrilla one, Kitchener's ruthless system of blockhouses, barbed wire and scorched earth certainly brought the Boer commandos to heel in the end, but like all his previous military actions it was fraught with setbacks, clumsiness and waste. Compared to Garnet Wolseley, the clever and boldly imaginative general whose reputation Kitchener's most unjustly obscured — perhaps because Wolseley failed to rescue Gordon from Khartoum, whereas Kitchener avenged him — Kitchener looks like a bungling and brutish cowboy.

Yet, hated and envied by many of his professional equals and superiors, feared and respected rather than loved by his soldiers (whom he hardly deigned to speak to), cold, hard and egotistical in manner to all except his intimates or those who might help his career, he was a fantastic success. Neither of these biographies leaves any doubt why: he was relentlessly and singlemindedly ambitious and persistently lucky. Both biographies also bring out the soft, sometimes domestic and aesthetic (he collected porcelain and loved gardens), occasionally weak and indecisive creature that lurked far down under that alarming 6 foot 2 inch shell with its purple face, steely eyes and savage moustache, but Royle emphasises another more unexpected contradiction. Kitchener was a much better diplomat than soldier. He was not only good at insinuating himself into the good opinions of important people — the Royal Family, the Cecils, Lord Cromer, etc. — whose patronage he needed, he could outwit such deft and equally ruthless political operators as Milner and Curzon and — most surprising of all — negotiate flexibly, courteously and successfully with the French commander during the touchy Fashoda incident or the Boer leaders in the final stages of the guerrilla war.

The only real mystery is his sex life. His close relationships with his various youthful aides, his lack of any with women (except his sister and certain socially advantageous ladies such as Lady Cranborne, with whom he kept up a busy correspondence) and the fact that he decorated his rose garden at Broome Park with statues of boy-athletes, suggest that he was, at least latently, homosexual. Warner does not think he was, Royle hedges, but we shall probably never know better than Ivy Compton-Burnett, who often stayed at Broome Park after it became a hotel: 'He was a bachelor or something, wasn't he?'

Warner's biography is much the shorter and he is the older and more experienced military historian, but many of the episodes are snatched in the telling and the book as a whole relies more on gist and anecdote than carefully reconstructed detail. Royle's is considerably more critical of its subject, but in the end, because it looks at him thoroughly and freshly, succeeds in bringing to life and even gaining one's intermittent sympathy for a character who typified the arrogant barbarism of the British Empire at its climax, but also, once that Empire was fighting for its life, understood as the politicians did not that 'only a decisive victory over Germany followed by a fair peace treaty, would prevent further war in Europe'. □

Making a meal of it

Bernard Padden

Just Williams
KENNETH WILLIAMS *Dent* £8.95

ON CHAT SHOWS Kenneth Williams can sound funny because of his skill at organising a personality which detracts from rather than enhances what he is saying. But remove the distorted vocals, the fey mannerisms and commit his material to paper and you're left with. . .well. nothing. In this autobiography he seems to have created a form of literary anti-matter. His ability to home in on the non-event is quite staggering.

> But when he [Stanley Baxter] scanned the menu at Skindles he expostulated: 'Twelve and six for tea?'
>
> I pointed out it was a set tea. 'You get scones and cakes as well as the tea.'
>
> 'At this price I should want the pot. Come on. Let's find somewhere else.'
>
> I had to agree with him. We left hastily and found a hotel opposite where an ample tea was served for half a crown and we returned to London feeling we'd scored a minor victory.

Riveting stuff. When Mr Williams isn't dining out on trivial anecdotes he's garnishing the narrative with numbing platitudes such as 'where there is reciprocity racial barriers become irrelevant — what matters are the

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human affections that bind all mankind.' Oh, give us a break Kenneth — and he does, or rather he doesn't, for Mr Williams's gourmet style is at its height when he decides to take the reader on holiday.

He has the rare gift of making the most exotic locations sound dull. Like a railway announcer, he tends to mention places rather than describe them. In any case, differences of landscape and culture vanish when the author is feeling peckish. In Ismir, 'we found a taverna by the waterside where we ate grilled mullet, Turkish meatballs with salad and a bottle of wine. Bev scrutinised the bill and said, "This lot has come to a pound each".' Or in Beirut, 'I took his advice and dined at a restaurant called Angelo's where a 3-course meal and a glass of wine came to thirty shillings.' What seems to bind him to all 'mankind' isn't so much 'human affection' as the prospect of a cheap nosh-up and as for racial barriers, where an organisation like the League of Nations failed Kenneth Williams could, if given the chance, unite the world into one vast menu.

At one stage Williams compares himself to such classical figures as Cratinus and Plautus and so it is perhaps not surprising that he should choose to reveal his political views through a series of Socratic dialogues. On this occasion his disciple is Bernard Bresslaw.

> 'Socialists say the people should dig a well and then get their water free.'
>
> 'Communal effort seldom produces the well, Bernard. It's generally the result of one man's vision and expertise.'

It would be unwise to put Mr Williams in charge of an irrigation project.

In his book the Wise Clown talks a lot about 'comedy' and 'art', so what are the results when he attempts to produce some? Here he is at work, collaborating with John Law. Coincidentally, the sketch is set in a restaurant.

> John said, 'Then she could ask, "Is this toad-in-the-hole?" and the waiter can say, "No it's punched up the hooter".'
>
> I said, 'No, she must have pheasant.'
>
> 'Why?'
>
> 'Then when it comes to ordering the wine the man can say, "I'm on the fish and you're on the game".'

This could be the first time in literature that someone has actually managed to substitute food for thought.

As a comic Williams is at his best (and sometimes worst) when he is being camp. But,if he has successfully exploited his gay inclinations, he has never realised them, or so he claims. Not wanting to risk his career he protests his celibacy. I find it ironic, indeed pitiful that Williams should support a system and ideology that has forced him to suppress his 'yearnings' and impose a kind of permanent sexual curfew on himself. And what a lavish supporter he is. 'The traditions of inherited wealth breed indifference to bribery. As we've seen in America, presidents will profit from their temporary tenure in a way that monarchs would disdain.' So finally he seems to be calling for universal incorruptibility based on a system where we all become Queen. I believe Mr Williams has been setting an example for years. □

OPERA

And there was light

Andrew Clements

Eve blows her own basset horn while Michael explains his unhappy adolescence

Like God before him, Stockhausen has embarked on a mammoth seven-part creation: a cycle of operas with one for every day of the week. The British premiere of Donnerstag (Thursday) *has just opened at Covent Garden*

IN ITS FIRST two new productions of the 1985-86 season, the Royal Opera is trying hard to make amends for its neglect of contemporary and unfamiliar 20th-century repertory. At the beginning of October there will be a double bill of one-acters by Alexander Zemlinsky, while last week saw the opening of *Donnerstag aus Licht*, the first part of Stockhausen's mammoth stage project to be seen in Britain.

Whatever misgivings there might be over the result, those of us who have nagged at the Covent Garden administration to do something positive about new opera ought at least to express gratitude where it is due. That the house was given the chance to commission the work in the first place and turned it down (La Scala got it instead) and that this production has been postponed at least once is now all history. The production of *Donnerstag* (directed by Michael Bogdanov, conducted by Peter Eötvös, sound projected by Stockhausen himself) is glossy and, within the limits of the work itself, highly effective. Whether those who flock to see it — there were rumours that all performances were sold out before the first night — will come away satisfied that they have had an authentic dramatic experience is another matter.

It's now eight years since Stockhausen announced to the slightly nonplussed musical world that he was embarking upon an operatic venture that would outstrip even Wagner in its gargantuan proportions and which would, he envisaged, take at least 20 years to complete. *Licht*, as he called the cycle, would be made up of seven operas, intended when finished to be performed on the consecutive evenings of a week. In 1977 he produced one section of *Tuesday (Dienstag)*, part ritual, part mime, and then set about the composition of the components of *Donnerstag (Thursday)*, which was first seen in its entirety in Milan in 1981. Since then *Samstag (Saturday)* has been premiered (again at La Scala) in 1984. It soon became clear that in stretching the conventional limitations of music drama to suit his own purposes Stockhausen was able to have his cake and profit from it at the same time: he was still free to accept commissions for concert works, confident in his own ability to fit them, somehow, somewhere, into the grand dramatic scheme of things.

Perhaps the single overriding feature of the whole *Licht* industry is the supreme self-confidence that drives it. Stockhausen has never been short of that commodity: from his earliest days as a total serialist when, along with Boulez

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and Nono, he took on the musical establishment in vigorous polemical style to champion the new musical language; through what is to date his most impressive series of works, those of the 1960s (and the feature of the Barbican/BBC Stockhausen Festival last winter); to the much less certain pieces of the 1970s, when he appeared to be seeking new directions and tried out a number of more or less imperfect dramatic and musical ideas. The great works of the 1960s were similarly diverse in their subject matter and choice of media, but they did share a common formal language, a way of building substantial stretches of music as a sequence of 'moments', each self-contained and sufficient in itself.

What sparked off *Licht* seems to have been a further evolution in Stockhausen's language, this time in his approach to harmony and even melody; serial techniques were replaced with music constructed from melodic formulae, whose permutations could supply whatever Stockhausen required and whose repetitions could give his music clear centres of pitch, analogous in some ways to 'old-fashioned' keys and tonalities. Armed with this rather primitive new weapon, Stockhausen set about writing more than 30 hours of music.

What he lacks, or at any rate lacks in any traditional sense of the term, is a convincing dramatic instinct. His music has always had its moments of theatricality but, when required to produce a dramatic scheme as an equal partner to his music, as *Licht* demands, he falls back on naive story telling and mystical rhetoric. There is a story line of sorts through *Donnerstag*: Michael, young, musically gifted and German, has an unhappy adolescence during World War II, loses both parents but excels as a musician (Act 1); travels around the world (Act 2); returns home to be hailed as the Archangel Michael and sees himself as bringing 'celestial music to humans and human music to the celestial beings' (Act 3). But each act is completely self-contained, with the only links between them the formulae for the three leading characters — Michael, Eve and Lucifer — and some contrived reprise of earlier action and music towards the end of the final scene.

Those who stayed with Stockhausen's music of the five years or so preceding the start of *Licht* will have a good idea of what to expect, and not be surprised to find brilliant, imaginative passages cheek by jowl with moments of squirming embarrassment, or the strangely ill-focused characters from the *Book of Urantia*, a piece of occult arcana which supplanted Sufism in Stockhausen's philosophy in the early 1970s and which furnishes the ideas behind much of the opera, or the eurhythmic-based language of gestures which is scrupulously notated in the opera to accompany the minimal dramatic action. Each of the major characters takes instrumental, vocal and dance-mime forms: Michael is both a tenor voice and a trumpet, as well as a dancer; Eve a soprano, basset horn and and dancer; Lucifer a bass, trombone and dancer; so that a straightforward duet immediately involves six different performers. The director's task cannot be an easy one.

Bogdanov has stuck to his task admirably. The second act, 'Michael's Journey Around the Earth', is the most successful, and that is really a piece of concert music with theatrical trappings, a superb trumpet concerto for Stockhausen's son Markus which brings together a whole galaxy of musics in the kind of joyous kaleidoscope that he used two decades ago in his tape piece *Telemusik*. It is one of the composer's finest orchestral scores, and Bogdanov's production, with the trumpeter travelling round the earth upon a giant astrolabe and the galaxy arrayed about him, provides a worthy visual complement. Everyone, including the producer, is in more trouble in the outer acts, where the action and, crucially, the music is much thinner. The cartoon-like scenes of Act 1 just about hang together, though the music almost disappears at times and the libretto has its share of idiocies.

The third act provides the most extreme opportunity for total boredom I've ever experienced in the opera house. It's made up of two big scenes: 'Festival', a predominantly choral set piece with a nicely judged comic interruption, and 'Vision' which, though shorter, is easily the more interminable. Stockhausen's music and dramatic invention reach rock bottom here as Michael recalls the highlights of his life and grinds out his moralising message. Even the production almost gives up at this point.

If anyone who reads this has already bought a ticket for *Donnerstag*, I would not advise them to think of trying to cut their losses: *Licht* in some shape or form is going to be around for a while yet, and I suspect this gives a good idea of what the whole thing will be like. Besides which, the performances are uniformly excellent and there are about 45 minutes of first-rate music to be gleaned from the four hours of the opera, and Stockhausen's best work is always worth hearing. □

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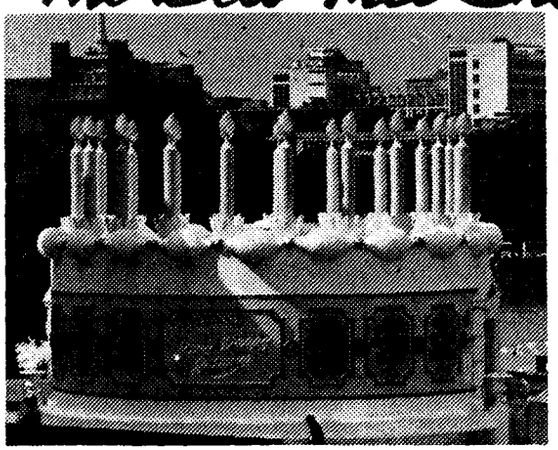

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POP

Down and in

Biba Kopf

Are our politically 'right-on' stars playing the Establishment's game? Swimming towards the mainstream come some nastier, more vituperative musical fish

IN THIS PERIOD of crisis made dreary (it being a crisis without foreseeable close) pop's political troubadours can see no light at the end of their tunnel visions on unemployment, the nuclear controversy, the Thatcher government.

They — Weller, Billy Bragg, The Redskins — keep on rocking, railing, ranting, regardless of the fact they're not shaking anything; at least, not anyone who isn't already shaking along with their anger. The core problem of these particular benefit-circuit troubadours is their inability to turn or twist their words, to find within them the sting that might transport their tales somewhere beyond mere complaint or the naming of names.

In their refusal to force an issue, to transgress

Peter Anderson

Clint Ruin: 'Bleed now, sell later

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the boundaries of its debate, lies their powerlessness. Further, they too readily accept the place allocated to them. Whether they like it or not, they are part of pop's healthy complexion, their concern acting like Clearasil on the spotty charts. Choosing so to bed themselves, they become part of a consciousness compatible with the social order they're opposing. With their despised — because 'banal' — chart bedfellows, they form an unlikely puritanical alliance. Under its prohibitive gaze those *wanting* a greater play of desires within pop, or, at minimum, pleasures falling outside the heavily mediated mainstream, are made to feel dirty and somehow diseased.

Well, these disaffected might respond, if dirty we are, then dirty we shall be. If pop rejects us, makes us feel abject, abjects us from its social club, then we shall in turn embrace all that is abject. In the abject we shall dig our hole, make the hole our own, thereby become whole.

'This is mine,' moan **The Swans**, a New York group which has converted its singer Mike Gira's sense of abjection into a gaping maw of churning black noise. 'I own this thing/I hate everything that I don't own/I own this/I own this hole/Get out of my hole.' (From their *Raping A Slave* EP on K422/Some Bizzare.)

Buried in their respective holes, then, why not simply leave them there? What have they got to offer except their own deforming misery? Why not simply leave them to rot in the condition they readily embrace?

This is to reckon without a disease's capacity rapidly to infect others. The bacilli incubated by the 'Abjects' within the sticky incestuous heats of their respective holes are proving exceptionally virulent, the most active Abject being Clint Ruin, who has collaborated with groups like The Swans, germinated the group **Foetus** and provided them with the dictum that distinguishes them all from the readily marketable approach of pop production: Bleed now, sell later.

An Australian who emigrated first to London before moving to New York, Ruin is about to release a fourth LP, this time as **Scraping Foetus Off The Wheel**. Called *Nail*, it is the most remarkable exhalation of disgust, mingled with grotesque carnival routines, since his last LP *Hole*. On *Nail* he pumps themes common to gore movies and pulp culture — lust, greed, perverse sex, serial murders and, inevitably, Manson — to the point where they burst even the loose constraints of these genres. He inflates abhorrent deeds into ghastly, bloated metaphors for the response to what he claims to be the dull, deadeningly oppressive climate of Britain now.

In contrast to Ruin's carnival mockery of rock and the goodness it seems happy to represent, other Abjects generate different closed worlds of noise and image to match the needs of their own desires. His friend **Lydia Lunch** is a rarity: a woman who projects her abjection through the normally male orientated gaze of SM literature. In the New York underground film *The Right Side Of My Brain* (available on Widowspeak video here) she imagines bruising encounters to confirm her abject state, drawing some perverse satisfaction in dragging others into her hole. Her NY compatriots The Swans realise their singer Gira's apparently gimlet concentration on disgust for the body as a form of musical inertia: utterly and frighteningly unique.

The British duo **Coil** offers the inverse of The Swans' self-disgust. They celebrate filth. Their LP *Scatology* is abjectly, deliriously up. And a 12" single cover of 'Tainted Love' summarises how far they've penetrated acceptable standards with their subversions.

One way or another, these Abjects force the very real horror at their core so as to explode the aesthetics that filter out shock, restoring to it the power to affect us again. In this period when the very subject of crisis has become dreary through repetition, the Abjects' restoration of its true horror is invaluable. □

FILMS

Pursuit of love

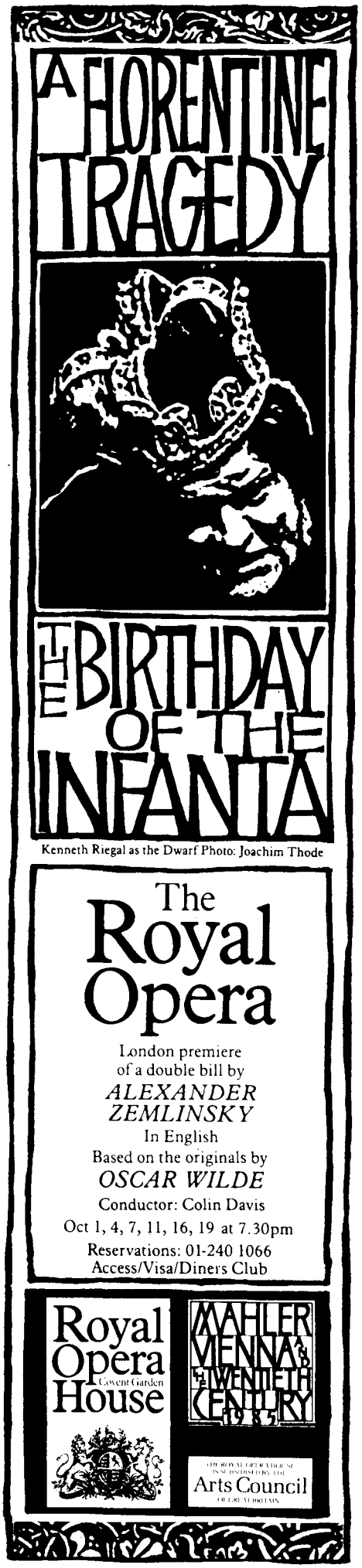
John Coleman

Camila (15)
Curzon, Mayfair
The Hustler (18)
Screen at the Electric
Fletch (PG)
Empire
Body Double (18)
Classic, Chelsea; Cinecenta; Filmcenta

MARIA LUISA BEMBERG'S **Camila**, a costume drama of some finesse and force, has benefited from the recent relaxation of Argentinian censorship in that its subject matter, based on actual events — the runaway love affair of an upper-class young Catholic girl and a priest, their eventual capture and execution — would hardly have been countenanced by previous regimes. Although set back in 1847-8, this colourful story of doomed passion under a dictatorship is explicit about the triple threat of Church, state and patriarchy.

With respect to the last, Argentinian mothers (and fathers?) have taken the film so much to their hearts that it is reported that five to six girl-babies a day are currently christened Camila: whether this, in fact, betokens a meaningful rise in feminist awareness — as some would have it — remains uncertain. Fernando Arribas's hazily effulgent photography romances the eye no end: the world well lost, etc. And Susu Pecoraro's beset Camila O'Gorman has the *beau rôle*, at once beautiful and stronger than her tormented priest-lover, Father Ladislao Gutierrez (a serviceable Spanish actor, Imanol Arias).

From the outset, as she moves through the comfortable, servant-cosseted life-style of a family with a town-house in Buenos Aires and a country *estancia* (to the tower of which a disgraced grandmother has been banished, under polite arrest), Camila is a concerned and unconventional lass, hiding kittens from a drowning, fending off a parentally-approved



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suitor, visiting that demented old granny lost in a 30-year-gone *amour*, confessing impure dreams in which mewing kittens and naked bodies become confused. The confessional is powerfully used, with the advent of young Father Ladislao, as the place where their unholy alliance breeds. Self-flagellation, a high fever: nothing avails the priest; and the pair flees, to refuge in a provincial village, where they are accepted as husband and wife under assumed names and set up a school for the local kids.

Stern papa O'Gorman, meanwhile, writes a disowning letter to the newspaper, overriding his wife's protests; arrest warrants go out, with religious caterpillars and lawyers in cahoots; one stormy day, a visiting priest unmasks the lovers. The village's police captain offers them horses, escape to Brazil. At which Ladislao succumbs to his calling, stays put, effectively deciding Camila's fate without a by-your-leave. The last-minute discovery of her pregnancy is brutally disregarded: in a harrowingly well-mounted sequence, both man and woman are shot. Twice the firing squad lowers its rifles before blindfolded Camila; an officer forces a third, lethal attempt at gun-point. Freeze on corpses thrown in a large box — and a title which tells how that mutinous squad was subsequently executed in turn.

The director puts steel into a period melodrama where it counts: in Camila's impassioned waywardness, in the ruthless politicking of clergy and military, in mama O'Gorman's late diatribe against her husband's callous and selfish concern with 'honour'. Maybe that movie-foistered crop of Camilas *will* be stirring things up in a generation or so.

Best of the rest by far is the revival of Robert Rossen's 1961 **The Hustler,** looking as grittily menacing in Eugene Shuftan's marvellous black-and-white images as it ever did, moving straight into its finest, most authoritative half-hour: a game of pool played out in a cavernous New York billiard-hall, turning — as night becomes day behind the blinds, then night again — into a tournament of wills. Brash young Eddie (Paul Newman) challenges the uncrowned champion of America, Minnesota Fats (Jackie Gleason, craftily cast) of the impeccable button-hole and talcumed hands. A lizard-eyed rich gambler (George C. Scott) watches, suddenly speaks: 'He's a loser', a quiet explosion that resounds through what follows, as Eddie does lose, picks up a lame-footed alcoholic woman (Piper Laurie, eerily right) in a bus station and restlessly moves in with her.

Eddie and this Sarah have some high-falutin lines about their different concepts of 'winning', but much of the dialogue is edgily real, the interiors reek with atmosphere and Eddie's final re-match with Fats (his slow, lone entrance is pure Western gun-slinger myth) finds him winning, yet snookered: interestingly, balefully. A flawed classic.

Fletch, floored by erratic director Michael Ritchie, has Chevy Chase as the smug-faced wisecracking reporter-sleuth of Gregory McDonald's genial invention, adopting many ho-ho disguises while untangling a heroin-scam and why a fellow should pay Fletch to kill him, in a botched version of the ur-book. Ur-umph. Brian De Palma's **Body Double**, simultaneously liberated in video, sends prize nerd Craig Wasson into a driller-killer maze of improbabilities, with rancid whiffs of sub-Hitchcock and his very own soft porn. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Dim Sum Hong Kong-born Wayne Wang's appealing mosaic portrait (with visual bows to Japanese master Ozu) of Chinese family in freshly observed San Francisco: widowed mother, unmarried daughter, cheery uncle. Touching, humorous, astringent, a young director's invitation to 'only connect'.

Witness Australian director Peter Weir in fine-tuned control of offbeat US thriller. Rugged but honest city policeman (Harrison Ford), grudgingly harboured from bent colleagues by time-warp Amish farmers, shares unconsummated love with Kelly McGillis's superb widow until the inevitable, estranging shoot-out.

The Purple Rose of Cairo Woody Allen's brilliantly faceted, sad-funny fantasy, as relevant to our depressed Eighties as its Depression Thirties. Actor in idiot movie descends from New Jersey screen briefly to woo movie-mad, downtrodden housewife, making chaos and whoopee. (Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels).

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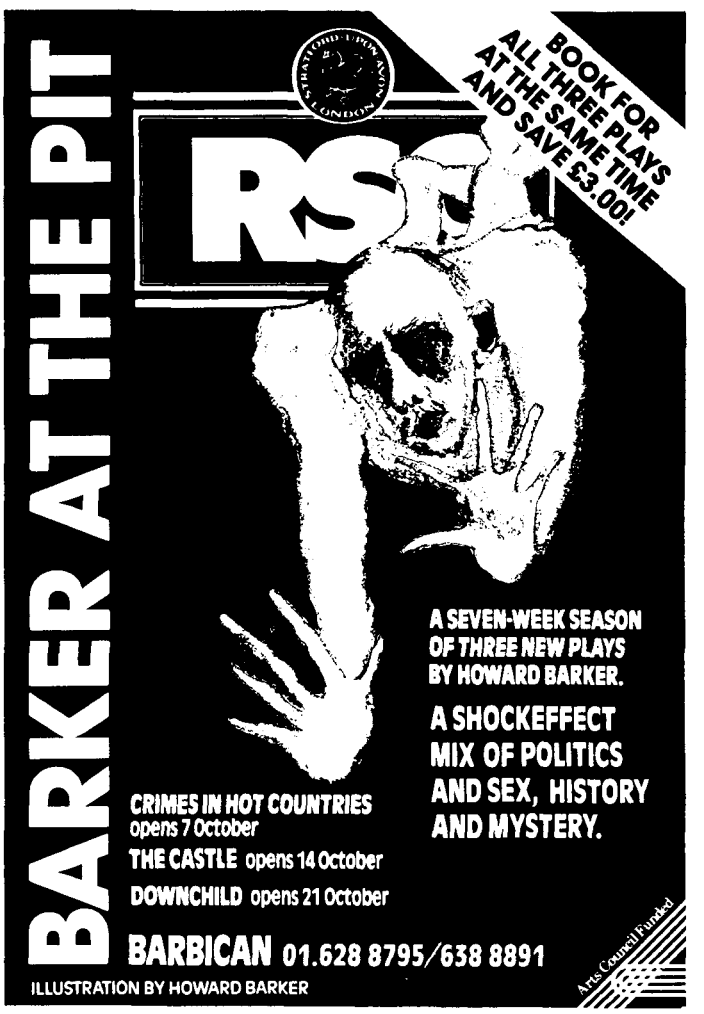
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THEATRE

Two-way stretch

Benedict Nightingale

Kiss of the Spider Woman
MANUEL PUIG Bush
Gigi
ALAN JAY LERNER & FREDERICK LOEWE *Lyric*

DILEMMAS HAVE ALWAYS been the stuff of drama. Should I refuse to kill the mother who murdered my father and incur the terrible disapproval of the god Apollo, or should I go ahead and become a matricide, outcast and pariah? Should I do my filial duty and take revenge on the usurping king my uncle, or should I listen to the doubts rising inside me?

Well, the homosexual prisoner at the centre of **Kiss of the Spider Woman** isn't an Orestes or a Hamlet — though, who knows, maybe those heroes really were squat, podgy and looked like Simon Callow — but circumstances have caught him too in a knot harder to disentangle than any described in *Scouting for Boys*. If he informs on his cellmate, who has been jailed for unspecified political indiscretions, he can return to the world outside and, specifically, to the ailing mother who needs him. And if he refuses to betray him, he'll only be handing him back to the torturers, who are readying themselves for his failure to prise out the necessary secrets. Molina, as the character played by Callow is called, can almost persuade himself that treachery is really friendship, evil good.

It's a fascinating dilemma — and one, I suspect, by no means unknown in the author's native Argentina just a few years back — but it takes its time emerging. The first half of Manuel Puig's two-hander consists entirely of the establishing of situation, character, relationship, and this isn't achieved without the odd lurch into something that struck me as perilously close to stereotype. For all Callow's efforts to humanise him, Molina sometimes seems little more than a parody of the flaunting, wiggling male queen, mother-obsessed, lachrymose, a bit bitchy and yearning for a sex-change. And yet that's scarcely adequate to sum up a role, and a play, that unquestionably sharpen and deepen as they go.

Molina and Valentin, as the urban guerrilla played by Mark Rylance calls himself, begin to talk about politics, about sex, about sex *and* politics. 'You're behaving like a woman,' sneers the butch prisoner, 'that can get in the way of getting rid of the torturers.' 'But if all men were like women, there wouldn't be any torturers,' ripostes the effeminate one. 'What would you do without men?' asks Valentin. 'You're right,' shrugs Molina, 'they're brutes, but I need them.'

More importantly, the two of them begin to feel and, as far as a cramped and seedy cell will permit, to act. Valentin falls sick, then into despair. Molina cleans him, succours him, shares his food with him and, finally, gives him himself. The irony is that all this is sincerely intended and lovingly done, yet is also contaminated by duplicity. Valentin's agonising stomach-cramps and debilitating diarrhoea have been deliberately caused by poisoned porridge, as Molina knows. The cake and roast chicken, which Valentin thinks have been brought in by Molina's mum, have actually been provided by their gaolers. When the political offender humbly thanks the gay offender for his generosity, he's seriously mistaken — but also seriously right.

Puig doesn't make quite as much of this troubling, contradictory, resonant situation as he might. At the moment one had expected the prison governor's bribes and blackmail to push Molina into some awful but decisive crisis, he is suddenly released on the somewhat unlikely pretext that he may unwittingly lead the police to Valentin's comrades; and the plot becomes progressively more implausible, at least on the superficial level. Why, for instance, should the political prisoner risk everyone's lives by asking his gay friend to make contact with terrorists for whom he appears to have no message at all? Yet, by the end, such objections seem quibbling. What sticks in the memory is the sight and sound of the two men, each at first marooned on his own ontological island, reaching across the huge political and sexual divides between them — and somehow managing to make a human contact which, thanks to the intensity of feeling that quietly seethes behind Ryland's bleak and skinny exterior and blazes up and out of the roly-poly Callow, we know to be impermanent but feel to be profound. The audience was clearly moved — judging by its stillness, then its rapturous applause, very moved indeed — and so was I.

It was a mistake to see **Gigi** the day after this tale of moral and physical anguish inflicted by a malign establishment. I found myself wincing at attitudes and behaviour it usually seems reasonable to take for granted in a period piece, especially one set on foreign territory: the snobbism, the arrogant treatment of underlings, the blithe assumption that it's fine to be very wealthy, very leisured and very, very useless. All the same, I don't think I would ever have been comfortable with the central story, like the same authors' *My Fair Lady* a variation on the ugly duckling who becomes a swan. It's not so much that the cygnet is being raised solely to be, so to speak, a dish on some rich man's table. It's rather that this fate scarcely seems worse than the one which eventually overtakes her: the bored Gaston, archetypically haughty Parisian of the spoiled 1890s, will actually *marry* Gigi before he devours her.

We're meant to applaud; but I couldn't, perhaps because Amanda Waring was a rather fetching Gigi and Geoffrey Burridge seemed to be striving with conscientious perversity to double Gaston's already ample charmlessness. Add Sian Phillips as Gigi's imperious Aunt Alicia and Jean-Pierre Aumont as Gaston's Uncle Honoré, a debonair old roué apt to launch smilingly into vaguely paedophiliac numbers when feeling nostalgic, and you've an evening which even the quirky presence of Beryl Reid, playing Gigi's grandmother, can't make sympathetic. John Dexter directs, with a physical austerity that's doubtless deliberate and an imaginative and emotional one that probably isn't. □

TELEVISION

Andrew Rissik
In hell

C.S. LEWIS once wrote that a man who accepts no guilt can, ultimately, accept no forgiveness. Meditating on Christianity's most truly detestable doctrine — the conception of Hell — he suggests that the doors of such a place are locked from within. People are bad because they want to be, and God leaves them alone. Josef Mengele — the handsome young Nazi geneticist who performed unspeakable atrocities at Auschwitz — seems never to have acknowledged the appalling depravity of his own behaviour. To the end, he denied his guilt and, cagey and unhappy, his thinking betrayed a dreadful confusion of motives.

In ITV's documentary, **Mengele**, the most revealing moment came towards the end of the programme. Hiding out in South America, under the protection of a sympathetic family, Mengele lived in a house only a few yards away from a particularly dangerous stretch of road. When accidents took place, Mengele wished to go out and help, compelled, he said, by his hippocratic oath. To conceive of a mind which can find no contradiction in the practice of scientific torture and an apparently genuine desire to help the injured is to look the banal paradox of Nazism full in the face.

The most comfortable and most dangerous excuse for the Nazi doctrine is to ascribe to it a sort of uncompromising and melodramatic satanism. If the Nazis were monsters, if Hitler was a form of Anti-Christ, then we are all let off the hook. This evil of theirs, enacted to the accompaniment of a full Wagnerian orchestra, derived from the mercurial lunacy of Nietzsche and coloured by the flickering light of a metaphorical Hell, is one of the greatest aberrations ever to have gripped humanity, and we absolve ourselves by pronouncing it inexplicable and diabolic. The value of *Mengele* was to suggest that the man was squalid, ordinary and muddle-headed. I disliked the trappings of the programme — too many films on the Nazis use Wagner's music with complacent glibness as a source of spurious dramatic atmosphere — but found the matter of it more complicated.

We are, by now, familiar with what Mengele did at Auschwitz. But he was sent there on the recommendation of teachers who enjoyed eminence, respect and freedom long after 1945. An assistant, working with him after his flight to Argentina, described him as a cheerful and high-spirited man, the sort who whistled, joked and told funny stories. We were told how his family, prosperous and mercantile, monitored his early exile, were generous financially, but never failed to recognise, in the way canny businessmen do, that Dr Josef's reputation would not be good for trade. His son Rolf, ignorant for a long time of his father's identity, met him shortly before he died and, in an interview of great bravery and candour, described the disquieting and exceedingly painful emotions that the situation evoked.

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In the end, a puzzling, contradictory and revealing picture emerged from all of this. There seems to have been an element in Mengele that was human and decent, but that was also abominably and unforgiveably weak. The moral test of the Nazi era — its incentive to evil — was ferociously demanding, and those who sought refuge in their ordinariness, who were conveniently short-sighted and compliant, came out of it badly.

HITLER SEEMS to me to have been a tyrant with the soul of a vengeful, second-rate artist. In the grip of an insane, obsessive creed, his leadership was magnetic and uncompromising. In this sense, the dilemma he presented was unusual.

Hitler demanded absolute obedience to a system that was plainly and disgustingly wrong, a system whose philosophy was so deranged and simplistic that it was both illogical and morally untenable. In this, he was no mere self-seeking dictator with grandiose territorial ambitions. He was an idealist, a peddler of a fake religion, and those who carried out his orders could not excuse themselves, as he could, on the grounds that they were mad. Men like Mengele and Eichmann were not simply the casualties of a warped ideology.

By refusing to call Hitler's bluff, by accepting what he taught them, they made the system workable. By claiming that they were only obeying orders, that they found it too difficult to swim against the tide, they insisted that humanity was passive, persuadable and incapable of moral thought. If they were ordinary, their ordinariness was profoundly and deliberately irresponsible. C.P. Taylor's chilling stage play, *Good*, gives us the best and most accessible dramatic account that we have of such a process.

Josef Mengele was a man who cannot have thought, who preferred not to think, whose repeated denials attest to the naggings of an unquiet conscience. The mere fact that he refused to plead guilty — that he insisted he could not and would not have done such things — reveals the working of a normal, sane and rational moral sense. A man who denies the genetic horrors of Auschwitz knows perfectly well that they were wrong. And the whistling, good-natured Mengele of those early years in Peronist Argentina implies a balanced and intelligent individual who has had a brush with hell and who is grateful for the calm and sunlight of what he hopes will be a new life.

The value of this programme was to show how easily a clever and ambitious man could be seduced into naked and straightforward evil. It was chilling because it showed us, once again, that weakness is a matter of choice, that this choice — this moral laziness — proves evil to be something humdrum, something everyday and human. □

Correction

In last week's review of Jo Spence's photographs, the phrase 'That the concern can prove a source of restorative self-definition. . .' should have read, 'That the *camera* can prove a source of restorative self-definition. . .' We apologise for any confusion caused by the typographical error.

Billy Strickland

Hurley-burly

Huw Richards

'49ERS WILL STUFF Chicago Bears' read the graffito in the Fitzroy Tavern gents, neatly scripted in between 'Newport County Rule' and the equally unlikely, not to mention physically impossible fantasies of somebody called Kevin.

Five years ago this would have been an incomprehensible, culture-specific coded message from an American tourist. Given the location, it's still possible that a passing American was responsible, but plenty of British 'readers' can now appreciate its significance, not to mention the accuracy of the prediction.

Five million Britons stayed up into the early hours last January to watch American Football's Superbowl (the Cup Final) in which the aforementioned San Francisco 49ers disposed of Miami Dolphins with even greater aplomb than they'd shown in seeing off the unfancied Bears. Most are tuning in again every Sunday evening with the new season returning to its regular slot on Channel Four. A thriving British League has sprung up and the game's devotees support two monthly magazines.

Last week Dublin played Kerry in the All-Ireland Gaelic Football Final at Croke Park, Dublin; many of Britain's Irish population still follow Gaelic sports with the attention the native British population devotes to soccer; no comparable British-American population exists yet the odds are that the TV audiences following events from Croke Park will not remotely have rivalled those for the Superbowl.

The reasons for this have little to do with the sports' intrinsic merits. Brought up on soccer and rugby — the formative sporting diet of a large number of British fans — I find the Gaelic games much more appealing.

Both Gaelic football (with its elements of soccer, rugby and a little basketball) and hurling (which tosses in some hockey and much inspired mayhem) can look at first like brawling close relatives of mediaeval folk football: bodies everywhere; boots and, in the case of hurling, sticks flailing in all directions. But, once that impression passes, the pattern emerges of fast, fluid and vigorous games, moving from end to end with an awesome speed — matched only, among contact sports, by Australian rules — and incorporating an impressive range of skills. These latter were exemplified by Galway's brilliant goal against Offaly in the All-Ireland hurling final: jumping against two large defenders, the scorer picked a fast-moving, hard ball out of the air, darted away from the defenders and lashed the ball into the roof of the net, from ten yards, with a ferocious sweep of his hurley. As a combination of athleticism and ball skills, it was fit to grace any sport.

American football is also played by superb athletes. When progressive rugby coaches like John Vaughan of London Welsh talk about 'American footballer' type forwards, they're talking about six-foot-five, 240-pound men who can also run and handle. And they're ten-a-penny on Channel Four — but their skills are channelled into single, specialised tasks in defence or attack, the players off the field half the time and, when in action, subordinated to the choreography of the coach and the pre-planned moves in the club's 'play-book': a document whose size and complication normally rivals that of the Treaty of Rome. Besides which, American football is stop-and-

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start, with little flow. Much action is attritional, based on the gain and loss of a few yards.

But all this helps it as a TV spectacle. Stop-and-go gives the network space for ads, while planned predictability allows the vast batteries of camera crew to develop immense expertise and the breakdown into specialities provides scope for statistical detail beyond Bill Frindall's wildest dreams. A big-field game, it can still be contained successfully in a small-screen frame.

Add in the differing level of resources of a US network and Ireland's RTE — whose hurling final transmission illustrated the contrast dramatically by first appearing to come through only one camera, then breaking down altogether ten seconds from time — and the greater popularity of the US game becomes more explicable.

But NBC and RTE's relative budgets aren't the only explanation. Sports normally disseminate from large, powerful nations to smaller ones. Victorian Britain's longest-lasting legacy worldwide is arguably organised sports and, having exported rugby to the US when we were 'top nation', we are now receiving this amended-beyond-recognition version by return.

This was the process the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) wished to resist when it codified hurling and football as antidotes to the encroaching British sports of soccer, rugby, hockey and cricket. The GAA's history has been inextricably linked with that of Irish nationhood, suffering the same splits over Parnell, the Civil War and how closely one deals with Britain and its influences. Identification with the church was, until recently, carried to the extent of singing 'Faith of my Fathers' before major matches and these are still ceremonially started by a Bishop (though church worthies no longer run the risks endured when they performed the actual start — a practice discontinued when a Bishop of Cashel had difficulty escaping from the start of a fiercely contested Munster final).

There has been a substantial break with sectarianism — most importantly with the 1971 vote to rescind rule 27, the controversial 'Ban' prohibiting participation by members of the GAA in soccer, rugby, hockey and cricket — but the game has never sought to proselytise, with even exhibition games in New York and London confined to local Irish communities.

Nor, for that matter, has American football made active attempts to spread (unlike, for instance, rugby league, which is forever seeking to break new ground) but the overwhelming cultural power of the United States provides the impetus. Most British viewers have some conception, thanks to television, of what Dallas, New York, Miami and San Francisco look like, but how many have the same of Cork and Galway, never mind Cavan and Kilkenny?

If Gaelic games could be presented with the PR flair and the careful explanation of nuances seen in American football coverage, there must (building on a bedrock of expatriate interest) be great potential in them. If, indeed, some British people could be brought to identify with Cork, Galway or Kilkenny in the way that they currently do with Miami or Seattle, we might even start to understand Ireland a little better. One thousand years too late, maybe; but no bad thing. □

Naseem Khan

From scratch

VIDEO ARTISTS must have had a gloomy sort of pleasure as they leafed through last Sunday's papers. No, nothing at all about the largest concentrated onslaught to date on the British public on behalf of independent video. Nothing about the television programmes (young video work on BBC; three weekly programmes, *Eleventh Hour*, on Channel 4) or the daily showing of new work (ICA and other venues). Even some DER shops, in an unusually imaginative acknowledgement of the harmony of self-interest, have been hosting installations by five video artists. To what effect?

Writers don't write on independent video, said Mike O'Pray, with patent justice, at the day-long conference to examine different aspects of the art. It is considered in the margins of other concerns (O'Pray does a round-up, for instance, in *Art Monthly*) and has no written magazine of its own. Even the Tate, he said marginalised it: a small room, indifferent equipment and no one employed to develop this vein of work.

Considering that 40 per cent of British households now have home video machines, that the body of independent video is growing steadily and that much of it is imaginative/abrasive/challenging stuff, this no-man's-land status seems unnatural. Or is it so simple? Later that day, Ken Worpole of GLEB, counselling video-makers to give some thought to audiences and distribution, got short shrift. 'Insulting! We wouldn't even start making a tape without thinking about our audience!' said one maker of campaign tapes hotly.

So where is all the video? To the outsider, video appears like the popular cliché about London: a collection of villages; connected by major bus routes, certainly, but each with its own character and way of operating. The initial achievement of Channel 4's *Eleventh Hour*[1] — the final programme is screened this Monday — is that it offers an overview of this complex, contradictory and half-hidden world.

The average video-user not unnaturally sees the product in terms of the local shop — spotty prints of *Batman* and *Animal Farm*. Less visible, but at least as energetic, are the products of the independents — art video tapes, for instance, that abstractly explore the potential of TV as a medium and whose images make you wonder what Van Gogh would have done with a portapack; community video, that places itself at the service of specific campaigning issues, scratch video that subversively mingles and jumbles snatches of televised material, so that, for instance, Reagan and Thatcher (*Secret Love* by Gorilla Tapes) walk off soulfully hand in hand into the sunset.

The ethos of the world is frankly thrilling. Video-makers intersperse the short tapes of *Eleventh Hour* with their views of what it's about. 'Taking television, that shop window on the world, and chucking a brick through it.' A demystification of the concepts of television, whose conventions have, unquestioned, dominated our lives for so long. A personal view, as opposed to the medium's bland consensus. A countervailing force, a critique of the box, demanding a response, not passivity.

All these are brave ideas, but more than enough of the product lives up to them. To look at, it can be ravishing. Scratch video images hop and jump with a ritzy glamour, fast editing creating a product that makes your adrenalin hum. Individual artists use the medium disturbingly (at times, too, with boring, fine art obscurity). I was entranced by Robert Cohen's *Juste le Temps*. The wordless tape used the central figure of a woman on a train to hang wonderful, dreaming half-images in which surrealistic colour boiled and became liquescent.

Women artists are well represented. Kate Elwes's *With Child* has a quiet, steady insistence to its explorations. The clarity with which she presents herself makes normal television fare seem suddenly oddly unreal. That, at a simple level, is the most valuable contribution video art can make — to start to make critics out of viewers.

Community video-makers will go further, aiming to make doers out of viewers. 'The mission . . . is not to report but to fight; not to assume the spectator's role but to intervene actively,' says the Walter Benjamin quote at the end of Barefoot Video's most recent tape. Shown on Channel 4, *Health or Human Rights? A Happier Old Age* concerned itself with the way in which government cuts undermine the geriatric section of the NHS and subsidise private old people's homes. As a demonstration of the way in which community video operates, it is worth looking at in itself. Two special interest groups — a community association and a health workers' group — independently made videos, under Barefoot's guidance, about separate aspects of care for the elderly. Barefoot then included sections of each video in this third one, setting them in a framework that documents the process. 'Something new and exciting is growing,' declares an elderly man from the first group. 'It's the video camera.' It makes for a dignified process in which the voices of ordinary people came over strongly[2].

The presence of a different voice and more democratic possibilities is what links Barefoot to Elwes to Cohen to Gorilla. At times more tenuous a link than at others, it also begs numerous questions. How really accessible is it (the ICA conference seemed full of friends and practitioners)? How much does it use the very conventions that it attacks? What relationship could it have with TV which it theoretically exists to subvert? Can it emerge from its present narrow circuits? Should it? Given it is a world that exists to stimulate query, it is not inappropriate that it provides very few easy answers. At least the questions now have wider circulation. □

[1]Eleventh Hour *(C4, Mon, 11pm) draws on much material from London Video Arts, an open access unit with hiring facilities: 79 Wardour St, W1 (01-734 7410).*

[2]*Available for hire from Barefoot Video, 50 Brunswick St West, Hove, Sussex (0273 773206).*

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Weekend competition

No 2892 Set by Jim Anthony

Time for acronyms again — not the naughty Norwich kind which caused such editorial displeasure a few years ago, but *reinterpretations of contemporary* organisations. E.g. The Council for the Protection of Rural England or CPRE might mischievously be rendered as the Campaign to Preserve Rich Exclusivity. More examples, please, by Thursday 10 October.

No 2889 Set by Gerard Benson

Spokespersons' explications of what was good about history's disasters.

Report By Rosie Hughes

Oh you poor loves. Either you're already coming down with those debilitating little autumn coughs and colds or, and I don't mean to be un*kind* Gerard, there was something about this competition which led you into, well, rather dull and boring ways. Such a lot about the benefits to technology, the advantages of a slimmed-down population, the employment of coffin-builders and the creation of works of art. So little of that tone of whingeing or bombastic self-justification peculiar to spokespersons. Still, well done those of you who earn ten pounds with a touch of ingenuity or individuality and if the rest of you take care, keep warm and don't worry, I'm sure you'll be feeling more perky in no time.

In an exclusive interview with Noah Lamechson, God explained about That Flood, which caused a bit of inconvenience in the Middle East recently. 'A lot of non-swimmers went under,' he quipped, 'but We've definitely ensured a secure future for the boat-building industry — share prices are now really buoyant (excuse the pun!) And do you know, the president of the Babel Pigeon Fanciers Association told me he's had a 3,000% increase in membership since the spillage? Can't be bad, can it? But the best of all is,' He added with a twinkle in His eye, 'that monogamy's had its biggest ever shot-in-the-arm. Boy, have I had some trouble getting that one across!'

CYNTHIA HALL

In reply to those critics who appear dissatisfied with my decisions in the Procurator's Court in Judea, may I say that, not having held office, they do not understand the nature of responsibility. I have always taken abuse *cum grano salis*. The man Jesus, whom I did not condemn, revealed himself as a *lusus naturae* — a freak of nature. We all benefit from such miracles, as they are called by his followers. Without the so-called tragedy of his execution and what followed this Nazarene would hardly have merited a footnote in the list of Essene agitators. As it is, he has opened up new fields of theological speculation.

JAY BROWNE

The recent catastrophic dis-assembly of the engine fitted to the unlucky aircraft, and the resulting high-temperature environment, was merely a minimum-impact problem. An airborne malfunction would have provided for a total death-rate. Right? Within the framework of time and space, this comfortingly random event has provided a truly wonderful opportunity for airline engineers around the world — working under our exclusive direction — to locate dozens of airplanes with thus far non-critical lines of weakness within their combustion chamber casings. Airplane engines will continue to be made by us. So y'all fly with us again now, y'hear?

SVEN TOMMECS

We must rejoice in the AIDS epidemic — nay, I am happy to say, *pan*demic — not merely in a Whitehousian awareness of its being such a seemly scourge for the sin of Sodom. Nor must we give thanks for it simply because, with the risk spreading increasingly to *hetero*sexual intercourse, it may do much to curb the reckless and irresponsible procreation of the working classes. No — we must welcome this saving virus and the salutary plague it has promoted *principally* because its daily highlighting by the more sober sections of our national press successfully diverts attention from all other serious issues — and, *above all*, because it is the one curse of modern Britain for which even the most fanatical student Trot cannot blame the present government.

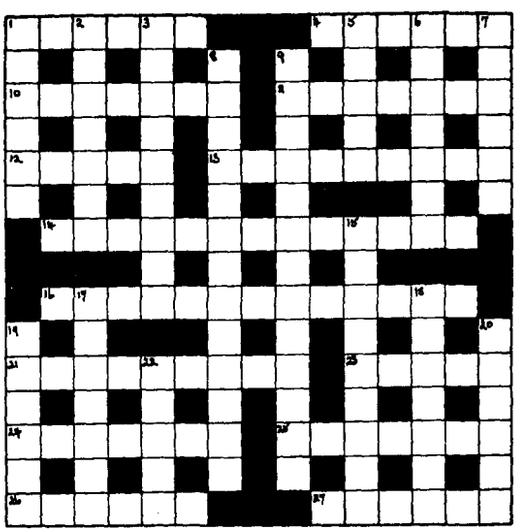
JON FERNSIDE

'We've got the world's first time-capsule right here in Pompeii,' claimed a spokesperson after Vesuvius' eruption last week wiped out the entire town. 'Not only will we have a tourist industry the envy of all Latium, but we've given a new slant to history. Political history, the big-name stuff is dead; it's domesticity that grabs the imagination now — how they lived, where they washed, what the dog-basket looked like . . . and, as a bonus, have you noticed how good the stone is for getting ink-stains off your fingers?

D.A. PRINCE

Weekend Crossword 1494

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1494, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 15 October.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

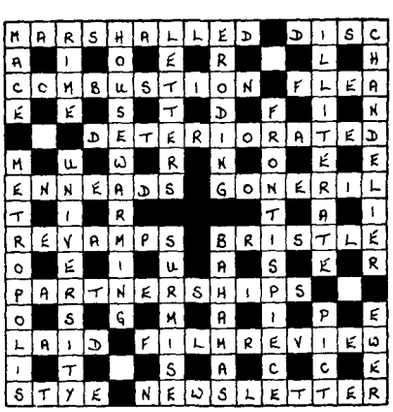
1. One who is about to go on one's holidays to Kerry? (6)
4. Devices for getting it right without having marks (6)
10. Quite just as a note to foreigners (7)
11. Childhood of one's imagination (7)
12. Place which sets us back a little bit (5)
13. Light showing movement of water beside the rock (9)
14. Stray cattle penned in by one who fights for a vessel (13)
16. Television is not for the general? (6,7)
21. Monuments provided when one had to die in antiquity during feasts (9)
23. Money which provides relief for rugger players? (5)
24. Go in all directions with speed without help returning (7)
25. Flexible although in existence in the last ice age (7)
26. Whips man held by girl (6)
27. Closely united even if old age were forgotten (6)

DOWN

1. Engine needed for one who is out of breath (6)
2. Monster caught a man on time (7)
3. Turns pale when I see total is tampered with (9)
5. Man who is covering up America (5)
6. Study what is past and forgive (7)
7. Designates manners (6)
8. Rhyming intriguer (13)
9. Town in which the church is under a pretender (13)
15. Nine carat perhaps but not in spirit (9)
17. Letters which make an essayist the reverse of unhappy (7)
18. Ascribed to a duet played by the devil (7)
19. The unprincipled appear the morning before the test (6)
20. Fought although shut in (6)
22. The student would go right after this author (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1492



Prizewinners to 1492

Mrs M. East (Ruislip, Middx)

Kenneth Edinborough (Colchester)

Gwen Pearce (Coventry)

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MALE, 36, on a Manpower 12 month scheme, interests: literature (except long novels) cinema, hiking, seeks woman in the West Midlands area for friendship. Box (39)1517.

PETITE, ATTRACTIVE, warm, professional lady, 50, who likes herself and others, seeks honest, contemporary London male, to share life. Music, literature, theatre, dining, countryside. Box (39)1518.

PROFESSIONAL GENTLEMAN graduate, 50s, calm, courteous with kind disposition, conservative tastes but liberal minded, mainly middle but some high brow interests, shortly able to move from South East, would like to hear from a compatible, tallish, attractive, country-loving lady, resident in any area. Box (39)1558.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, early 30s, intelligent, sensitive, francophile, interested in most of the arts, seeks a woman gentille et sympathique. London. Box (39)1557.

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W. MIDLANDS: professional man, 40, socialist, solvent, humorous, would love to meet interesting lady, under 40, with whom to enjoy life. Box (39)1513.

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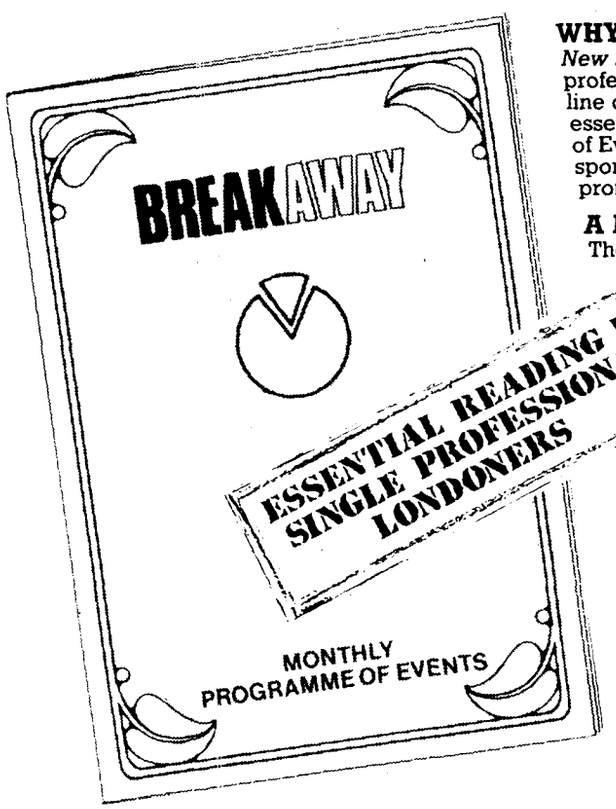

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Further information: Admissions Enquiries (ref C993C), Middlesex Polytechnic, 114 Chase Side, London N14 5PN, telephone 01-886 6599 (24 hours).

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 29 Sept. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'The Occult Side of Nature'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gdns, London W2.

MESSAGES

URI, SCIENTIST, formerly of Moscow, please write again, giving address, I couldn't contact you by phone. Box (39)1556.

PURSUITS

MANHATTAN FEMALE wishes to meet a fellow New Statesman reader, male, 50-70. Box (38)1478.

MATURE MALE seeks stimulating companion for Malaga/Seville/Granada, over Xmas/New Year — by train. Offer good company in return. Single male or female. Box (39)1510.

NORTH NOTTS: vegetarian wishes to meet new people and to make friends. I am male, 30, a father, a gardener, and new in this area. If you're non-smoking, non-violent and anti-sexist, I'd like to hear from you! Box (39)1515.

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AGENDA

SUN 29 SEPT

LINKS EUROPA Fringe Meeting 2 p.m. European Defence: A Socialist Strategy. Denzil Davies MP, Pascal Boniface, Ien v.d. Heuvel MEP, Highcliff Hotel, Bournemouth.

SERA FRINGE MEETING. Nuclear Power — The Big Debate. 3 p.m. in the Royal Bath Hotel, Bath Rd, Bournemouth. Chair: Alan Roberts MP. Spkrs: Pete Wilkinson (dir. Greenpeace), Colin Ahearn (TGWU).

MON 30 SEPT

LABOUR PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
"Barons or Benefactors — Labour and the Trade Unions"
5.30pm Durley Hall Hotel, Durley Chine Road, Bournemouth.
Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Alan Sapper ACTT, Mel Reed ASTMS.
Tickets: 50p.

CHILDBIRTH IN POVERTY — THE RISKS
Speakers: Jo Richardson, Frank Dobson, Wendy Savage
Chair: Renee Short
Highcliff Hotel
St Michael's Road
Bournemouth
7.30 pm
National Council for
ONE PARENT FAMILIES
The Maternity Alliance

SERA FRINGE MEETING. Privatisation — The Threat to Public Health. 7.30 p.m. Chine Hotel, Boscombe Spa Road, Bournemouth. Chair: Chris Smith MP. Spkrs: Rodney Bickerstaff (NUPE), John Edmonds (GMBATU), John Pitt (NALGO).

TUES 1 OCT

CAMPAIGN
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE LABOUR PARTY
Inaugural meeting. Speakers Roy Hattersley, Giles Radice, Clive Jenkins in the Chair. 5.15pm. Carlton Hotel, Bournemouth.

'IN THE EYE of the Storm'. Eyewitness reports from Central and Latin America. 5.30 p.m. Embassy Hotel, Meyrick Rd. Speakers: Judith Hart (Chair), George Foulkes MP, Campbell Christie, George Galloway, Jeremy Corbyn. Speakers from Guatemala, Chile and El Salvador.

LABOUR LAND CAMPAIGN: take back the land! Why Labour needs land reform policies, The Pavilion, Westover Road, Bournemouth. Tony Benn MP, Jack Boddy (Agric. workers), Dave Wetzel. Contact Kay Knights (Secretary), 20 Ryland Road, London NW5, 01-267 2245. Now available Land Information Pack £1.00; leaflets free.

THE CURRENT POLITICAL and Social Situation in Malaysia. Dr Chandra Muzaffar, President of Aliran — the Malaysian social reform and human rights movement — talks about recent developments, in an open meeting organised by Inside Asia magazine at 6.30 pm. Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1. All welcome, Admission free. For any further information ring Inside Asia 01-278 3806

WED 2 OCT

THE LABOUR PARTY — Crime and Policing. Speakers: Clive Soley, Richard Kinsey, Jock Young. Highcliff Hotel, West Cliff, Bournemouth, 5.30-7.30 p.m. Refreshments provided. Organised by Merseyside County Council.

BEYOND FAMINE: The politics of Development. Fringe Meeting at Labour Party Annual Conference. Speakers: Barbara Castle MEP, Stuart Holland MP, Andaiye, Alex Kitson. 5.30 p.m. Durley Hall Hotel, Durley Chine Rd, Westcliffe, Bournemouth. Org. by Labour Aid & Development Committee.

SAT 5 OCT

IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT: day of action — down with Thatcher's order! Down with Thatcher's law! Freedom for the Irish! Justice for us all! Demonstration 1 p.m. Bidborough Street, London WC1. Sponsors Alf Lomas MEP, Ron Brown MP, Dafydd Ellis Thomas MP, Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, GLAIR, CROWD. Rally 7 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Speeches, music, exhibitions.

LIVERPOOL. Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Day Conference. 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Speakers, Videos, Workshops. Centre for Communication Studies, Liverpool University, Abercromby Square. Fee £1. Unwaged free.

MON 7 OCT

MOLESWORTH: South-East London CND bustrip, calling at: Bromley, Lewisham, Elephant & Castle, King's Cross, Henlys Corner (£4 return). Details: 01-852 6251.

SAT 19 OCT

'WAR AND SOCIAL Change in Twentieth Century Britain'. Weekend Couse — 19-20 Oct. — on British Society and the two World Wars. For details contact the Course Secretary, OUDES, Rewley House, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA (0865 52901).

FORTHCOMING

NEXT ART THERAPY DAYS with Liesl Silverstone. Sun. 20 Oct., Sat 7 Dec., Sun. 12 Jan. Cost £20 each day. Deposit £10. Info/bookings/venue: 17 Cranbourne Gardens, NW11. 01-455 8570.

SUPERVISION SKILLS AT WORK. Sat. 30 Nov., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Cost £30. Are you responsible for managing or supervising other people? The day will give you an opportunity to develop more productive relationships with them. Info/bookings: Skills With People, 15 Liberia Road, London N5 1JP. Tel. 01-359 2370.

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The purpose of this Conference is to stimulate thought and discussion about initial and in-service teacher education for meeting special educational needs following the recent report of the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET) June 1984. The Union argued in its response to this report that it is essential to have 'structured progress towards improving the preparation of teachers'.

Delegates will all be concerned in one capacity or another with special education. We hope that those attending will include teachers, chief education officers, advisers, students, politicians, representatives of the voluntary societies and members of the press.

The Conference fee is £15.

For further information and application forms apply to Penney Muir, Education Department, National Union of Teachers, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BD. Telephone 01-388 6191.

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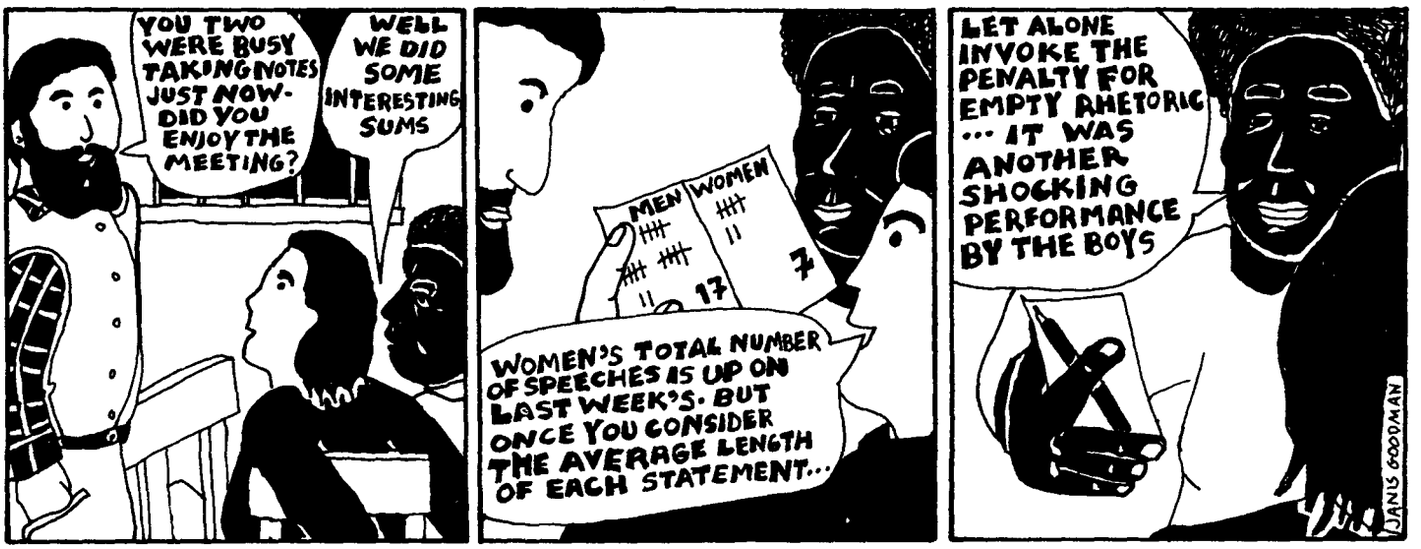
MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS: 'WHO'S COUNTING'


YOU TWO WERE BUSY TAKING NOTES JUST NOW- DID YOU ENJOY THE MEETING?
WELL WE DID SOME INTERESTING SUMS
MEN
WOMEN
17
7
WOMEN'S TOTAL NUMBER OF SPEECHES IS UP ON LAST WEEK'S. BUT ONCE YOU CONSIDER THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF EACH STATEMENT...
LET ALONE INVOKE THE PENALTY FOR EMPTY RHETORIC ... IT WAS ANOTHER SHOCKING PERFORMANCE BY THE BOYS
JANIS GOODMAN

CHESS

Reserving a Place

THE THREE-WAY play-off between Gavrikov (USSR), Speelman (England) and van der Wiel (Netherlands) to decide who was to be the official reserve for the forthcoming candidates tournament was a grim business. The few spectators who made the pilgrimage via Mile End to the Docklands Enterprise Area found most of the play far from enterprising.

The trouble with matches in general is that the chess gets swamped by psychological stress and the bluff and double-bluff of opening preparation. After two games with Gavrikov it was obvious to Jon Speelman that the Russian knew all the theory there is to know and there was nothing worth playing against him, even with White. His second, William Watson, and I were trying to feed him selected delicacies from our own opening menus. Jon politely sniffed them, but rightly declined. Rule No. 1 is to be true to yourself and play your own sort of game.

At least Jon had a match-plan, if not a game-plan. Since he had scored 2-2 against van der Wiel whereas Gavrikov had made 2.5-1.5 against the Dutchman, 2-2 would now see Gavrikov through. So let him have three draws. Then make the big effort in the final game when he is hoping for another draw and does not relish a fight. That would be very unpleasant for Gavrikov. And so it was. He defended rather weakly and so Speelman, the current British champion, now holds the reserve's contingency ticket. No signs of ailing or indisposed candidates, however. I suppose Smyslov, now a veteran of 64, might have withdrawn. . .if Gavrikov had qualified.

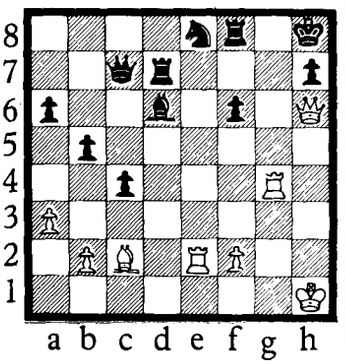
The game that finally extinguished the hopes of the luckless van der Wiel was an impressive performance by Gavrikov that will have to be picked over carefully by adherents of the French Defence.

Gavrikov-van der Wiel, London Docklands 1985. French Defence. 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. Nf3 Bd7 8. dxc5 Introduced by Spassky in his 1977 match against Korchnoi, this move poses one of the major problems in current French Defence theory. **8. . .Ba4 9. Rb1 Nd7** Here White has usually played 10. Rxb7, but Gavrikov has another move. **10. Be3 Qa5 11. Rxb7 Qxc3+** I think this is the beginning of Black's problems. Why not just 11. . .Nxc5 and leave the pawn on c3 to fester for a while? **12. Bd2 Qxc5 13. Bd3 a5 14. 0-0 Qc8 15. Qb1 Nc5 16. Bb5+ Kf8 17. Rb6 h6 18. Rc1 Qc7 19. Bxa4 Nxa4 20. Rb7 Qc8 21. Bxa5 Nc6 22. Be1 g6 23. c4 d4 24. Rd1 Kg7** White is clearly better, a pawn ahead with the safer king, but the violence with which he ends the game is quite surprising. **25. Nh4! Nxe5** White threatened both Qxg6+ and Rxf7+. **26. Qe4 Nd7 27. Rxd4 Nac5 28. Rdxd7! Nxd7** If 28. . .Nxe4 29. Rxf7 + Kg8 30. Rg7+ Kf8 31. Nxg6+ Ke8 32. Nxh8 wins. **29. Bc3+ Kh7 30. Nxg6! Qxb7 31. Nf8+ Kg8 32. Qxb7 Rb8 33. Qe4 Nc5 34. Qe1 1-0.**

Problem

In last week's position there was (so far as I can see) nothing spectacular against **1. . .Be7.** But White can be content with **2. Bxe7 Kxe7 3. Nc5** or **2. . .Qxe6 3. Bxb4 Bxe4 4. Rhe1** — Black is material down and cannot castle.

It's White to play and win again from this diagram.



Solution

1. Re7! interferes with Black's defences since capture on e7 will allow mate on either h7 or f8. Neiman-Haase, a 1968 correspondence game, ended 1. . .Qb7+ 2. Be4 Qxe4+ 3. Rgxe4 Bxe7 4. Rxe7 and Black resigned.

George Botterill

New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
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Published and distributed by The Statesman & Nation Publishing Co Ltd

Editor: Hugh Stephenson; **Deputy Editor:** Sarah Benton; **News Editor:** Andrew Lumsden; **Editorial staff:** Duncan Campbell, Jane Dibblin, Rob Edwards (Scotland), Patrick Forbes, Peter Kellner (Political editor), John Rentoul, Claudia Wright (Washington); **Literary Editor:** Gillian Wilce; **Arts Editor:** Harriett Gilbert; **Production Manager:** Joanne Hurst; **Layout & design:** Vicky Hutchings; **Editorial Assistant:** Jane Thomas

Subscriptions: Cecilia Milton, Joan Scanlon; **Circulation:** Liz Cooper, John Duncan; **Display advertisements:** Michael Roberts (01-253 2001); **Classified advertisements:** *Laura Berryman, David Jones (01-251 5487)*

Subscription rates: UK & Eire £37; Europe (air mail only) £41; rest of world: air speeded £41; air mail £52. USA: air speeded $62; air mail $83. Canada: air speeded Can $72; air mail Can $97.

Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc. (US Postmaster: Address changes should be sent to New Statesman, Speedimpex USA Inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104)

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QUIZ

1) Who is Paul Quiles?

2) Who was Laura Mountney?

3) Who said last week that Thatcher's 'highest ideals are the shabby values of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*'?

4) Which *Dynasty* star denied last week that she was angry with Rock Hudson for having kissed her without telling her he had AIDS?

5) Which film star last week urged Reagan to 'cut the military budget and give more to AIDS'?

6) Which head of state was kissed by Bob Geldof last week?

7) Which rock singer recently said: 'I stand behind Reagan when it comes to build-up, to stand, be able to play hardball with other countries that are aggressive to free countries'?

8) Which pop singer recently criticised Arthur Scargill for 'enjoying it all too much'?

9) Which former pop star is now a Labour councillor in Islington?

Answers

1) France's new defence minister; 2) Maiden name of Laura Ashley; 3) David Steel; 4) Linda Evans; 5) Shirley MacLaine; 6) President Hillery of Ireland; 7) Neil Young; 8) George Michael; 9) Rory Storm (now Councillor Peter Powell)

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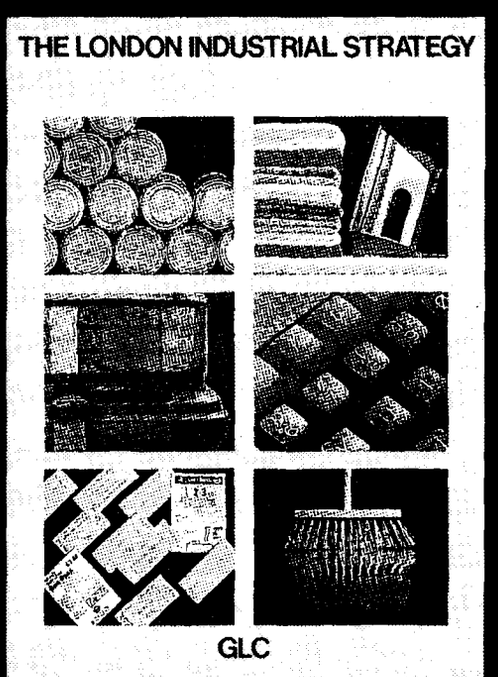
THE ALTERNATIVE TO WRITING OFF LONDON'S INDUSTRY, JOBS AND PEOPLE



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